

## STUDY VI

### THE WORK OF HARVEST

Character of the Harvest Work--Gathering the Wheat--Bundling and Binding and Burning the Tares--Their Origin and Prolific Growth--Consumed Like the Chaff of the Jewish Harvest--Time Correspondencies Noted--The Casting off, Gradual Fall and Final Destruction of Babylon--The Sealing of the Servants of God Before the Plagues Come upon Babylon--Judgment or Trial, Both as Systems and Individually --The Test of the Jewish System Typical--The Testing and Sifting of the Wheat--The Wise, Separated from the Foolish Virgins, Go in to the Feast--"And the Door was Shut"--A Further Inspection, and the Casting Out of Some--Why? and How?--The Close of the "High Calling"--The Time is Short--"Let no Man Take Thy Crown"--Eleventh Hour Servants and Overcomers.

"HARVEST" is a term which gives a general idea as to what work should be expected to transpire between the dates 1874 and 1914. It is a time of reaping rather than of sowing, a time of testing, of reckoning, of settlement and of rewarding. The harvest of the Jewish age being a type of the harvest of this age, observation and comparison of the various features of that harvest afford very clear ideas concerning the work to be accomplished in the present harvest.

In that harvest, our Lord's special teachings were such as to gather the wheat, who were such already, and to separate the chaff of the Jewish nation from the wheat. And his doctrines became also the seeds for the new dispensation, which opened (shortly after the nation of Israel was cast off) at Pentecost.

Our Lord's words to his disciples as he sent them forth, during his ministry to that church-nation, should be carefully

#### C136

remembered, as giving proof that their special work then was reaping, and not sowing. He said to them, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest: and he that **reapeth** receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." (*John 4:35,36*) As the chief reaper in that harvest (as he also is in this one), the Lord said to the under-reapers, "I sent you to reap that whereon

ye bestowed no labor: other men [the patriarchs and prophets and other holy men of old] labored, and ye are entered into their labors"--to reap the fruits of those centuries of effort, and to test that people by the message, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand," and the King is present--"Behold, thy King cometh unto thee." *Matt. 10:7; John 12:15; Zech. 9:9*

In the Jewish harvest, the Lord, rather than to make goats into sheep, sought the blinded and scattered sheep of Israel, calling for all who **already were his sheep**, that they might hear his voice and follow him. These observations of the type furnish an intimation of the character of the work due in the present harvest or reaping time. Another and a larger sowing, under the more favorable conditions of the Millennial age and Kingdom, will soon be commenced: indeed, the seeds of truth concerning restitution, etc., which will produce that coming crop, are even now being dropped here and there into longing, truth-hungry hearts. But this is only an incidental work now; for, like its Jewish type, the present harvest is a time for reaping the professed church (so-called Christendom), that the true saints gathered out of it may be exalted and associated with their Lord, not only to preach the truth, but also to put into operation the great work of restitution for the world.

In this harvest, wheat and tares are to be separated; yet both of these classes, previous to the separation, compose the nominal church. The wheat are the true children of the

### **C137**

Kingdom, the truly consecrated, the heirs, while the tares are nominally, but not really, Christ's Church or prospective bride. The tares are the class mentioned by our Lord, who call him Lord, but who do not obey him. (*Luke 6:46*) In outward appearance, the two classes are often so much alike as to require close scrutiny to distinguish between them. "The field is the world," in the parable, and the wheat and tares together (the tares more numerous) constitute what is sometimes called "The Christian World," and "Christendom." By attending religious services occasionally or regularly, by calling themselves Christians, by following certain rites and ceremonies, and by being identified more or less directly with some religious system, the tares look like, and sometimes pass for, God's heart-consecrated children. In so-called "Christian lands," all except professed Infidels and Jews are thus counted Christians; and their numbers (including the few fully consecrated

ones--the saints) are estimated at about one hundred and eighty millions of Greek and Roman Catholics, and about one hundred and twenty millions of Protestants.

During the Gospel age, our Lord's instructions have been not to attempt a separation of the true from the imitation children of the Kingdom; because to accomplish a complete separation would occasion the general turning of the world (the field) upside down--a general unsettlement of the wheat, as well as of the tares. He therefore said, "Let both grow together until the harvest." But he added, "In the time of harvest I will say unto the reapers [angels, messengers], Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." (*Matt. 13:30*) Hence, in the time of harvest we must expect a general separating work, hitherto prohibited. While those symbolized by the wheat are ever encouraged to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ made them free, and to

### C138

avoid entangling alliances with open transgressors and with wolves in sheep's clothing, yet they were not to attempt to draw the line between the **fully consecrated** class (the wheat, the saints), and the tares who **profess** Christ's name and doctrines, and who to some extent allow these doctrines to influence their outward conduct, but whose heart desires are far from the Lord and his service. This judging of hearts, motives, etc., which is beyond our power, and which the Lord commanded us to entirely avoid, is the very thing which the various sects have all along endeavored to accomplish; attempting to separate, to test the wheat, and to keep out as tares or heretics, by rigorous creeds of human manufacture, all professors of Christianity whose faith did not exactly fit their various false measurements. Yet how unsuccessful all these sects have been! They have set up false, unscriptural standards and doctrines, which have really developed many tares and choked and separated the wheat; for instance, the doctrine of the everlasting torment of all not members of the Church. Though now becoming greatly modified, under the increasing light of our day, what a multitude of tares this error has produced, and how it has choked and blinded and hindered the wheat from a proper recognition of God's character and plan. Today we see what a mistake the various sects have made in not following the Lord's counsel, to let wheat and tares, saints and professors, **grow together**, without attempting a separation. Honest men in every sect will admit that in their sects are

many tares, professors not saints, and that outside their sectarian bars are many saints. Thus, no sect today either can or does claim to be **all** wheat, and **free** from tares. Much less would any earthly organization (except Christadelphians and Mormons) be bold enough to claim that it contained **all of the wheat**. Hence, they are without any excuse for their organizations, theological fences, etc. They do not separate

### C139

wheat from tares, nor can anything completely and thoroughly accomplish this separation of hearts except the method which the Lord has ordained shall be put into execution in the time of harvest. This shows the necessity for knowing when the time is at hand and the harvest work of separating is due to begin. And our Lord, true to his promise, has not left us in darkness, but is giving the information now due, to all whose hearts are ready for it. "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness [nor sleep] that that day should overtake you as a thief." *1 Thess. 5:4*

**The truth now due** is the sickle in this harvest, just as a similar sickle was used in the Jewish harvest. The reapers, the angels\* or messengers, now, are the Lord's followers, just as a similar class were the reapers in the Jewish harvest. And though others, throughout the age, were told not to attempt the separation of the wheat from the tares, yet those now ready, worthy and obedient will be shown the Lord's plan and arrangement so clearly that they will recognize his voice **in the time of harvest**, saying, "Thrust in the sickle" of present truth, and "gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." *Psa. 50:5; Mal. 3:17*

Not only is this the time for the gathering of the saints by the truth (into oneness with their Lord and each other, and out of fellowship with mere professors, tares), but it is also a time for cleaning up the field by consuming the tares, stubble, weeds, etc., preparatory to the new sowing. In one sense the "wheat" is gathered out from among the tares--because of the greater abundance of tares--as when the Lord says, "Come out of her, my people." Yet, in another sense, the separation is properly represented by the tares

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\*The word "angel" signifies **messenger**.

## C140

being gathered from the wheat. Really, the wheat has the place by right; it is a wheat-field, not a tare-field (the world of mankind being counted the ground out of which the wheat and also the tares grow or develop); so it is the tares that are out of place and need to be removed. The Lord started the wheat-field, and the wheat represents the children of the Kingdom. (*Matt. 13:38*) And since the field or world is to be given to these, and already belongs to them by promise, the parable shows that really it is the tares that are gathered out and burned, leaving the field, and all in it, to the wheat. The tares are returned to the ground (world) whence they came, and the first-fruits of the wheat are to be gathered into the garner, so that the earth may bring forth another crop.

The wheat was not to be bundled: the grains were originally planted separate and independent, to associate only as one kind, under similar conditions. But the parable declares that one of the effects of the harvest will be to gather and bind the tares in bundles before the "burning" or "time of trouble." And this work is in progress all around us. Never was there a time like it for Labor Unions, Capitalistic Trusts and protective associations of every sort.

The civilized world is the "field" of the parable. In it, during the Reformation, the winds of doctrinal strife, from one quarter and another, threw wheat and tares together into great batches (denominations), inclining some in one direction (doctrinally), and some in another. This huddled wheat and tares closely together, and took away much of the individuality of all. The doctrinal storms are long past, but the **divisions** continue from force of habit, and only here and there has a head of wheat attempted to lift itself to uprightness from the weight of the mass.

But with the harvest time comes the release of the wheat from the weight and hindrance of the tares. The sickle of

## C141

truth prepares this class for the freedom wherewith Christ originally made all free, though the same sickle has an opposite influence upon the tares. The spirit of the tares is toward sectarian greatness and show, rather than toward **individual** obedience and allegiance to God. Hence, present truths, the tendency of which they at once discover to be to condemn all sectarianism, and to test each individual, they reject and strongly oppose. And, though disposed to unite

with each other, all the sects unite in opposing the disintegrating tendencies of present truth, to such an extent as to draw the cords slowly, cautiously, yet tightly upon all **individual** thought and study on religious subjects, lest their organizations should fall to pieces and, all the wheat escaping, leave nothing but tares.

Each of the tare class seems aware that, if examined individually, he would have no claim to the Kingdom promised to the close followers of the Lamb. The tares would prefer to have the various sects judged as so many corporations, and in comparison one with another, hoping thus to glide into the Kingdom glory on the merits of the wheat with whom they are associated. But this they cannot do: the test of worthiness for the Kingdom honors will be an individual one--of individual fidelity to God and his truth--and not a trial of sects, to see which of them is the true one. And each sect seems to realize, in the greater light of today, which is scattering the mists of bigotry and superstition, that other sects have as good (and as little) right as itself to claim to be the one and only true church. Forced to admit this, they seek to bind all by the impression that it is essential to salvation to be joined to some one of their sects--it matters little to which one. Thus they combine the idea of individual responsibility with sectarian bondage.

As an illustration of a popular cord recently drawn tightly by sectarianism upon its votaries, we cite the seemingly

#### C142

harmless, and, to many, seemingly advantageous, International Sunday School Lessons. These lend the impression of unsectarian cooperation in Bible study, among all Christians. They thus **appear** to be taking a grand step away from, and in advance of, the old methods of studying with sectarian catechisms. These uniform lessons have the appearance of being an abandonment of sectarianism and a coming together of all Christians to study the Bible in its own light--a thing which all recognize to be the only proper course, but which all sectarians refuse to do actually; for, be it noticed, these International S. S. Lessons only **appear** to be unsectarian: they only **appear** to grant liberty in Bible study. Really, each denomination prepares its own comments on the scriptures contained in the lessons. And the committee which selects these lessons, aiming for the outward appearance of harmony and union, selects such passages of scripture as there is little difference of opinion upon. The passages and doctrines upon which they disagree,

the very ones which need most to be discussed, in order that the truths and errors of each sect may be manifested, that a real union might be arrived at upon the basis of "one Lord, one faith and one baptism"--these are ignored in the lessons, but still firmly held as before by each sect.

The effect of these and other similar "union" methods is to make Protestantism more imposing in appearance, and to say to the people in fact, if not in words: You **must** join one of these sects, or you are not a child of God at all. Really, it is not a union as one church, but a combination of separate and distinct organizations, each as anxious as ever to retain its own organization as a sect or bundle, but each willing to combine with others to make a larger and more imposing appearance before the world. It is like the piling of sheaves together in a shock. Each sheaf retains its own bondage or organization, and becomes bound yet more

### C143

tightly by being wedged and fastened in with other bundles, in a large and imposing stack.

The International Lesson system, in connection with modern methods of "running" Sunday Schools, greatly aids sectarianism, and hinders real growth in the knowledge of the truth, in yet another way. So general a lesson is presented in connection with the "exercises" of the school, that there is scarcely time to consider the guarded, printed questions, with prepared answers; and no time is left for the truth-hungry Bible student, or the occasional earnest teacher, to bring out other questions of greater importance, containing food for thought and profitable discussion. Formerly, Bible classes met to study such portions of the Bible as they chose, and were hindered from obtaining truth by the bondage of their own prejudice and superstition only, and the earnest, truth-hungry ones were always able to make some progress. But now, when increasing light is illuminating every subject and dispelling the fogs of superstition and prejudice, it is hindered from shining upon the Bible class student by the very International Lessons which claim to aid him. His time for Bible study is skillfully directed, so that he may get no new ideas, but be so continually occupied in the use of the "milk of the word" (greatly diluted with the traditions of men), as to take away all appetite for the "strong meat" of more advanced truth. (*Heb. 5:14*) In such classes, all time and opportunity for tasting and learning to appreciate "meat" is sacrificed, in obedience to the words, "We must stick to our lesson; for the

hour will soon expire." Well has the prophet, as well as the apostle, declared that, to appreciate the great doctrines of God, so essential to our growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God, we must leave the first principles and go on unto perfection--"weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." *Heb. 6:1; Isa. 28:9*

#### C144

While Sunday School methods have recently been considerably improved, they still leave much to be desired.

They contain some of the best of the Lord's people--who, anxious to serve the Master, are more or less bewildered by the show of numbers and appearance of "**work** for the Lord." Some good is accomplished, we admit, but it has its offsets. The earnest are hindered from personal duty and progress, in the doing of that which God committed to the parents, the neglect of which is an injury to the parents as well as to the children. The immature find the brief session and "exercises" more agreeable than Bible study. They are led to feel that they have performed a **duty**; and the **sacrifice** of the few moments is repaid by the social gossip and interchange which it affords. The little ones, too, like the "exercises," the singing, story-books, picnics, treats and general entertainment, best; and they and their mothers feel well repaid for the labor of dressing, by the opportunity thus afforded for showing their fine clothing. And the parental responsibility of religious home-training is very largely resigned in favor of the sham and machinery of the Sunday School. The Sunday School has been well named the nursery of the church and the little ones thus brought up in the nurture and admonition of the worldly spirit are the young shoots of that abundant crop of tares with which great Babylon is completely overrun.

Wherever, here and there, an adult Bible class does exist, and the teacher is candid and independent enough to leave the prescribed lesson, and follow up more important topics, giving liberty for the truth to be brought forward, whether favorable or unfavorable to the creed of the sect, he is marked by the worldly-wise pastor or superintendent as an unsafe teacher. Such teachers are indeed dangerous to sectarianism, and are very soon without classes. Such teachers, and the truths they would admit to candid investigation,

## C145

would soon cut the cords and scatter the sectarian bundles, and hence are not long wanted. Others are therefore preferred, who can hold the thoughts of their classes, divert them from "strong meat," and keep them unweaned babes, too weak to stand alone, and bound to the systems which they learn to love, and believe they would die without. The true teacher's place, and the true Bible student's place, is outside of all human bondage, free to examine and feed upon all portions of the good Word of God, and untrammelled to follow the Lamb whithersoever he leads. *John 8:36*;

### *Gal. 5:1*

While individual liberty **must** outwardly be recognized as never before, we see that really there never was a time when the bands were so thoroughly drawn, to bind all wheat and tares into the many bundles. There never was a time when arrangements were so close, and so restraining of all personal liberties, as now. Every spare hour of a zealous sectarian is filled by some of the many meetings or projects, so that no time for untrammelled thought and Bible study can be had. The principal design of these meetings, entertainments, etc., is sectarian growth and strength; and the effect is the bondage mentioned, so detrimental to the real development of the consecrated children of God, the wheat. These bands are being made stronger, as the prophet intimates. (*Isa. 28:22*) Some wheat and many tares constitute these bundles, from which it daily becomes more difficult to get free.

From what we have seen of the small quantity of truly consecrated wheat, and the great mass of "baptized profession" (as a Methodist bishop has forcibly described the tare class), it is evident that the burning of the tares will be a momentous event. It is a mistake, however, which many make, to suppose that the burning of the tares in a furnace of fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth

## C146

(*Matt. 13:42*), refers either to a literal fire, or to trouble beyond the present life. The entire parable belongs to the present age. Not only is this fire a symbol, as well as the wheat and the tares, but it symbolizes the **destruction** of the tares, in the great time of trouble with which this age is to close, and from which the wheat class is promised an escape. (*Mal. 3:17*; *Luke 21:36*) The great furnace of fire symbolizes the "great time of trouble" coming, in the close of this harvest,

upon the unworthy tare class of "Christendom."

Nor does the destruction of the tares imply the destruction, either present or future, of all the **individuals** composing the tare class. It signifies rather a destruction of the false pretensions of this class. Their claim or profession is that they are Christians, whereas they are still children of this world. When burned or destroyed as tares, they will be recognized in their true character--as members of the world, and will no longer imitate Christians, as nominal members of Christ's Church.

Our Lord explains that he sowed the good seed of the Kingdom, the truth, from which springs all the true wheat class, begotten by the **spirit of truth**. Afterward, during the night, the dark ages, Satan sowed tares. Doubtless the tares were sown in the same manner as the wheat. They are the offspring of errors. We have seen how grievously the sanctuary and the host were defiled by the great adversary and his blinded servants, and how the precious vessels (doctrines) were profaned and misapplied by Papacy; and this is but another showing of the same thing. False doctrines begat false aims and ambitions in the Lord's wheat-field, and led many to Satan's service, to sow errors of doctrine and practice which have brought forth tares abundantly.

The field looks beautiful and flourishing to many, as they count by the hundreds of millions. But really the proportion of wheat is very small, and it had been far better for the

#### **C147**

wheat, which has been choked and greatly hindered from development by the tares, if the worldly-spirited tares had not been in the Church, but in their own place in the world, leaving the consecrated "little flock," the only representatives of Christ's spirit and doctrine, in the field. Then the difference between the Church and the world would be very marked, and her growth, though **apparently** less rapid, would have been healthy. The great seeming success manifested by numbers and wealth and social standing, in which many glory so much, is really a great injury, and in no sense a blessing, either to the Church or to the world.

As we examine this subject, we find that many of these tares are little to blame for their false position as imitation wheat. Nor do many of them know that the tares are not the real Church; for they regard the little flock of consecrated wheat as extremists and fanatics. And, when compared with the tare multitude, the Lord and the apostles and all the wheat certainly do appear to be extremists and fanatics,

if the majority, the tares, be in the right.

The tares have been so thoroughly and so often assured that they are Christians--that all are Christians except Jews, infidels and heathens--that they could scarcely be expected to know to the contrary. False doctrines assure them that there are but two classes, and that all who escape everlasting torment are to be joint-heirs with Christ. Every funeral discourse, except in the case of the miserably degraded and the openly wicked and immoral, assures the friends of the peace and joy and heavenly glory of the deceased; and, to prove it, passages of scripture are quoted, which, from the context, should be seen to apply only to the fully consecrated, the saints.

Naturally inclined to reprove themselves, to conscientiously deny that they are saints, and to disclaim the rich promises of the Scriptures to such, they are persuaded

#### C148

to claim them, by their no better informed fellow-tares, both in pulpits and pews. They conscientiously feel--indeed they are certain--that they have done nothing which would justly merit everlasting torture; and their faith in the false doctrines of "Christendom" leads them to hope, and to claim, that they and all moral people are members of the Church to which all the rich promises belong. Thus they are tares by force of false doctrines, and not only occupy a false position themselves, but misrepresent the truly high standard of saintship. Under the delusion of the error, they feel a sense of security and satisfaction; for, measuring themselves and their lives with those of the majority in the nominal church, and with their deceased friends to whose funeral eulogies they have listened, they find themselves at least average--and even more consistent than many of loud profession. Yet they are conscious that they have never made any real consecration of heart and life, time and means, talents and opportunities, to God and his service.

But **as** the "chaff" class of the Jewish nation was consumed in the close of that harvest (*Luke 3:17*), **so** this "tare" class will be consumed in this harvest. As the chaff ceased from all pretention to divine favor as the triumphing Kingdom of God, before that harvest closed in the great **fire** of religious and political contention, which consumed that system, so it shall be with the tare class of so-called "Christendom." They will be consumed; they will **cease to be** tares; they will cease to deceive either themselves or others; they will cease to apply to themselves the exceeding great and

precious promises which belong only to the overcoming saints; and, when their various so-called Christian kingdoms, and their various religious organizations, rent by discords induced by the increasing light of truth, will be **consumed** in the fire already kindled, "the fire of God's zeal" (the great time of trouble with which this age will end--

#### C149

*Zeph. 3:8*), they will cease to claim for their worldly systems the name "Christendom."

After telling of the burning of the tares, the parable further declares, "**Then** shall the righteous [the wheat] shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." [What better testimony than this could we have, that the true Church is not yet set up in power, as God's Kingdom, and that it will not be thus exalted until this harvest is ended?] Then shall this sun of righteousness (of which Christ Jesus will always be the central glory) arise with healing in his beams, to bless, restore, purify and disinfect from sin and error the whole world of mankind; the incorrigible being destroyed in the second death.

Let the fact be remembered that, in the typical Jewish harvest, Israelites indeed, as well as imitation Israelites, constituted the Jewish or Fleshly House of Israel; that only the **true** Israelites were selected and gathered into the gospel garner, and honored with the truths belonging to the Gospel age; and that all others of that nation ("chaff") were not physically destroyed (though of course many lives were lost in their trouble), but were cut off from all Kingdom favors in which previously they trusted and boasted. Then trace the parallel and counterpart of this, in the treatment of the "tares" in the present burning time.

Not only has the Lord shown us what to expect in this "harvest," and our share in it, both in being separated ourselves and, as "reapers," in using the sickle of truth to assist others to liberty in Christ and separation from false human systems and bondages, but in order to render us doubly sure that we are right, and that the separating time of the harvest has arrived, he provided us proofs of the very year the harvest work began, its length, and when it will close. These, already examined, show that the close of 1874 marked the beginning, as the close of 1914 will mark the

## C150

end, of this 40 years of harvest; while all the minutiae of the order and work of this harvest were portrayed in that of the Jewish age, its type. Some of the marked time-features of that typical harvest we will now examine, and note the lessons which they teach, which are applicable now, and which our Lord evidently designed for this purpose, so that we might not be in either doubt or uncertainty, but might know of his plan, and be able to act accordingly, with strength, as cooperators with him in carrying out his revealed will.

All the time-features connected with the Jewish harvest (though they sometimes indirectly related to the faithful), had their direct bearing upon the great nominal mass, and marked periods of its trial, rejection, overthrow and destruction as a system or church-nation. Thus the Lord, as the Bridegroom and reaper, came (A.D. 29) not to the **true** Israelites only, but to the entire mass. (*John 1:11*) The progress of the harvest work there disclosed the fact that the grains of ripe wheat fit for the garner (the Gospel dispensation) were few, and that the great mass was wheat merely in appearance--in reality only "chaff," devoid of the real wheat principle within. When, three and a half years later (A.D. 33), our Lord assumed the office of King, and permitted (what before he had refused--*John 6:15*) that the people should mount him upon an ass and hail him King, it marked a point in this antitypical, Gospel harvest more important far than that of the type. The parallel to this, as we have seen, points to 1874 as the time of our Lord's second presence as Bridegroom and Reaper, and to April 1878 as the time when he began to exercise his office of King of kings and Lord of lords in very deed--this time a spiritual King, present with all power, though invisible to men.

The doings of our Lord, while there for a few hours typically

## C151

acting as King of Israel, are deeply significant to us, as unquestionably indicating, and shadowing forth, what must be expected here. What men **saw** him do at that time, such as riding on an ass into Jerusalem as king, and scourging the money-changers out of the temple, we recognize as typical--as done **here** on a larger scale, though the King, and the scourge of cords, and the proclamation of kingly authority, are now manifested in a very different way, and to the eye of faith only. But the Jewish type serves to call attention

to this fulfilment, which otherwise we would not be able to appreciate. The first work of the typical King was to reject the entire church-nation of Israel as unworthy to be his Kingdom, or longer to be treated as his special heritage. This was expressed thus: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. **Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!**"

***Matt. 23:37-39***

This, when applied to the present harvest, teaches that as in A.D. 33 typical Israel, after being recognized as God's people for 1845 years by favors, chastisements, etc., was cast off, rejected by the King, because found unworthy, after a trial and inspection of three and a half years, so in the present harvest, after a similar three and a half years of inspection, and at the close of a similar period of 1845 years of favor and chastisement, nominal Christendom would be rejected by the King as unworthy longer to receive any favors from him, or to be recognized in any manner by him.

But, as the rejection of nominal Fleshly Israel did not imply the rejection, individually, of any "Israelite indeed," in whom was no guile, but rather a still greater favor to such (who were set free from the "blind guides," and taught more directly and perfectly through new spiritual channels --the apostles), so here we must expect the same. The

**C152**

spiritual favors, formerly bestowed upon the nominal mass, belong henceforth only to the faithful and obedient.

Henceforth the light, as it becomes due, and "the meat in due season for the household of faith," must be expected, not through former channels, in any degree, but through faithful individuals outside of the fallen, rejected systems.

During his ministry, and up to the time when, as King, he cast off the Jewish system, our Lord recognized the scribes and Pharisees as the legitimate instructors of the people, even though he often upbraided them as hypocrites who deceived the people. This is evident from the Lord's words (***Matt. 23:2***)--"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; whatsoever therefore they bid you do, that observe and do." So, likewise, for a time the great religious rulers of nominal Christendom in Synods, Conferences, Councils, etc., measurably sat in Christ's seat as instructors of the people, as the Jewish Sanhedrin once occupied Moses' seat. But as, after A.D. 33, the scribes and Pharisees

were no longer recognized by the Lord in any sense, and the true Israelites were no longer instructed by these, but by God himself, through other, humbler, untitled and more worthy instruments, who were raised up among the people and specially taught of God, so we must expect and do find it here, in this parallel harvest.

The taking of the kingly office by our Lord in A.D. 33, and his first official act in rejecting the national church of fleshly Israel, taken in connection with all the striking parallels of the two ages, indicate very clearly that at the parallel point of time in the present harvest, i.e., 1878, mystic Babylon, otherwise called Christendom, the antitype of Judaism, was cut off; and there went forth the message, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." *Rev. 18:2*

### C153

The fall, plagues, destruction, etc., foretold to come upon mystic Babylon, were foreshadowed in the great trouble and national destruction which came upon fleshly Israel, and which ended with the complete overthrow of that nation in A.D. 70. And the period of falling also corresponds; for from the time our Lord said, "Your house is left unto you desolate," A.D. 33, to A.D. 70 was 36 1/2 years; and so from A.D. 1878 to the end of A.D. 1914 is 36 1/2 years. And, with the end of A.D. 1914, what God calls Babylon, and what men call Christendom, will have passed away, as already shown from prophecy.

Judaism was a divinely appointed type of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ which will control and regulate all matters; hence Judaism was properly a union of church and state--of religious and civil government. But, as we have already shown, the Gospel Church was in no sense to be associated in, or to have anything to do with, the government of the world, until her Lord, the King of kings, comes, assumes control, and exalts her as his bride to share in that reign of righteousness. Neglecting the Lord's words, and following human wisdom, theories and plans, the great system called Christendom, embracing all governments and creeds **professing** to be Christ's (but a miserable counterfeit of the true Kingdom of Christ), was organized before the time, without the Lord, and of wholly unfit elements. The fall of Babylon as an unfit church-state system, and the gathering out of the worthy wheat, therefore, can be and is well illustrated by the fall of Judaism.

The name Babylon originally signified **God's gateway**; but afterward, in derision, it came to mean **mixture** or **confusion**.

#### C154

In the book of Revelation this name is applied specifically to the church nominal, which, from being the gate-way to glory, became a gate-way to error and confusion, a miserable mixture composed chiefly of tares, hypocrites--a confused mass of worldly profession in which the Lord's jewels are buried, and their true beauty and luster hidden. In symbolic prophecy, the term Babylon is applied at times only to the Church of Rome, called "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots." The name could apply only to her for centuries, so long as she was the only mixed system and would tolerate no others; but other ecclesiastical systems, not so great as the "mother," nor yet so wicked, nor so radically wrong, sprang up out of her, through various attempted though imperfect reforms. Errors, tares and worldliness in these also largely predominating, the name Babylon is used as a general or family name for all the nominal Christian systems, and now includes not only the Church of Rome, but all Protestant sects as well; for, since Papacy is designated the mother system, we must regard the various Protestant systems which descended from her as the daughters--a fact very generally admitted by Protestants, and sometimes with pride.

Previous to the harvest time, many of God's people in Great Babylon discovered her real predominant character to be grossly antichristian (notably the Waldenses, the Huguenots and the reformers of the sixteenth century); and, calling attention to the fact, they separated from the mother system and led others with them, many of whom were tares, as the prophet had predicted, saying, "Many shall cleave to them with flatteries." (*Dan. 11:34*) Here were the separatings of the politico-doctrinal storms before the harvest time. Among these the tares, still predominating, formed other, though less objectionable, Babylonish systems.

Thus the wheat, though from time to time endeavoring

#### C155

to free themselves from the incubus of the tares (and especially from the grosser errors which fostered and produced the tares), and though blessed by these efforts, were still under their influence, still mixed with large predominance of

the tare element. But for the wheat's sake God's favor extended even to these mixed bunches or Babylonish systems; and not until God's time for effecting a complete and final separation--in the time of harvest, 1878--were those systems completely and forever cast off from all favor, and sentenced to swift destruction, and all of God's people explicitly and imperatively called out of them. In the very beginning of the age, God's people were warned against the deceptions of Antichrist, and taught to keep separate from it; and yet, for their trial and testing, they were permitted to be in a measure deceived by it and more or less mixed up with it. Every awakening to a realization of unchristian principles, doctrines and doings, which led to reform measures, tested and proved the wheat class, and helped to purify them more and more from the pollutions of Antichrist. But this last testing and positive call, coupled with the utter rejection of those systems, no longer to receive divine favor (as they had formerly received it, for the sake of the wheat in them), is to effect the final separation of the wheat class from all antichristian systems and principles. What truths those systems formerly held are now fast being swept away from them, being displaced by theories of men, subversive of every element of divine truth; and vital godliness and piety are being rapidly displaced by the love of pleasure and the spirit of the world.

With the declaration that Babylon is fallen comes also the command to all of God's people still in her, to come out--"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, **my people**, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (*Rev. 18:4*) The expression, "Babylon is fallen: Come out of her, my

### C156

people," clearly marks two thoughts which should be distinctly remembered. It indicates that at one time Babylon was not fallen from divine favor; that for a time she retained a measure of favor, notwithstanding her mixed character; that, however large the proportion of error which she held, and however little of the spirit of Christ which she manifested, she was not entirely cast off from God's favor until the harvest time of separation. It indicates that at some time a sudden and utter rejection is to come upon Babylon, when all favor will forever cease, and when judgments will follow--just such a rejection as we have shown was due in 1878. It indicates, also, that at the time of Babylon's rejection many of God's people would be in and associated

with Babylon; for it is after Babylon's rejection, or fall from favor, that these are called to--"Come out of her, my people."

The contrast between the many gradual reform movements of the past four hundred years and this final complete separation should be clearly discerned: they were permitted attempts to **reform** Babylon, while this recognizes her as beyond all hope of reform--"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad [intoxicated with her errors]. Babylon is suddenly fallen and broken: wail for her; take balm for her wound, if so be she may be healed. **We would have healed Babylon**, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one unto his own country [to the true Church, or to the world, as the case may be, according as each is thus proved to be of the wheat or the tares]: for her punishment reacheth unto heaven." *Jer. 51:7-9*. Compare *Rev. 17:4; 14:8; 18:2,3,5,19*.

Unhealed Babylon is now sentenced to destruction: the whole system--a system of systems--is rejected, and all of God's people not in sympathy with her false doctrines and

#### **C157**

practices are now called to separate themselves from her. The prophet gives the reason for this sentence of rejection, and the failure of some to comprehend it, saying:

"The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming home; but my people know not the arrangement of the Lord. [They do not recognize that a harvest time of full and complete separation of wheat, from chaff and tares, must come. In this they show less discernment than the migratory fowls.] How can ye say, We are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us [when you cannot discern the harvest time and the change of dispensations then due]? Truly, behold in vain wrought the pen, in vain the writers [because the word of the Lord by his prophets and apostles is made void, and set aside without attention, and creeds formed in the past "dark ages" are the lightless lanterns of them that walk in darkness]. The wise (?) [learned] men are ashamed; they are disheartened [by the failure of their cherished human schemes] and caught: lo, the word of the Lord have they rejected, and what wisdom have they [now]? [Compare *Isaiah 29:10*.] Therefore will I give their wives [churches] unto others, and their

fields [of labor] to the conquerors; for, from the least even to the greatest, every one [of them] is seeking his own personal advantage--from the prophet [orator] even unto the priest [minister], every one practiseth falsehood. [Compare *Isa. 56:10-12; 28:14-20.*] And they heal the sore of the daughter of my people [nominal Zion--Babylon] very lightly, saying, Peace, peace: when there is no peace [when her whole system is diseased, and needs thorough cleansing with the medicine of God's Word--the truth]. They should have been ashamed of their abominable work; but they neither felt the least shame, nor did they know how to blush: therefore shall **they** [the teachers] fall among them that fall; in the time of their visitation [or inspection--in the "harvest"]

### C158

they shall stumble, saith the Lord. I will surely make an end of them, saith the Lord; there shall be left no grapes on the vine, and no figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall wither; and the things that I have given them [all divine favors and privileges] shall pass away from them." *Jer. 8:7-13*

The succeeding verse shows that many of the rejected will realize the troubles coming, yet will still be blind to their real cause. They will say, Let us unite ourselves and entrench ourselves in the strong cities [governments], and **keep silence**. They somehow realize that neither reason nor Scripture supports their false doctrines, and that the wisest method is to keep silent, in the shadow of old superstitions and under the protection of so-called Christian governments. They are here represented as saying very truly: "The Lord hath put us to silence, and given us bitter poison-water to drink." The only refreshment they may have is the cup which they have mixed (the poison of bitter error, the "doctrine of devils," mingled with the pure water of life, the truth of God's Word). Shall not such as are of and who love Babylon, and who are therefore unready to obey the command, "Come out of her," be forced to drink the cup of their own mixing? Shall not such be forced to admit the falsity of their doctrines? They surely shall; and they will all be thoroughly nauseated by it. The next verse tells of the disappointment of their expectations, which were that their bitter (poison-water) doctrines would have converted the world and brought about the Millennium. They say, "We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!"--The disease of nominal Zion will grow rapidly worse from the time of her visitation and rejection, when the "Israelites indeed," obeying the divine

call, begin to come out of the nominal systems.

Some wonder why the Lord does not institute a still greater reform than any of the past, which have proved so futile and short-lived. They ask, Why does he not pour

### C159

out a blessing upon all the great sects and amalgamate them all into one, or else upon some one and purify it of dross, and draw all others into it? But, we ask, Why not also amalgamate all the kingdoms of earth into one, and purify it?

It should be sufficient for all of God's children to know that such is not what he reveals as his plan. And a little further reflection, from the standpoint of God's Word, shows us the unreasonableness of such a suggestion. Consider the number of the professed church (four hundred millions) and ask yourself, How many of these would themselves claim to be **fully consecrated**, mind and body, to the Lord and the service of **his plan**? Your own observation must lead you to the conclusion that to separate the "wheat" from the "tares," by removing the "tares," would in almost every instance leave but a small handful even in the largest church buildings or cathedrals.

The reason for not attempting to purify the nominal systems is that no amount of cleansing would make the unconsecrated mass of "Christendom" and their organizations, civil and ecclesiastical, suitable to the Lord's work, now to be commenced in the earth. During the past eighteen centuries he has been selecting the truly consecrated, the worthy ones, and now all that remains to be done is to select from among the living those of the same class--and they are but few--as only a few are lacking to complete the foreordained number of members in the body of Christ.

The reason for discarding all human organizations, and not reforming the least objectionable one and calling out of all others into it, now, is shown by our Lord's treatment of the various Jewish sects in the harvest or close of their dispensation; for then, as now, all were rejected, and the "Israelites indeed" were called out of all, into freedom, and taught the will and plan of God by various chosen vessels of God's own selection.

Illustrating this subject to the Jews, the Lord in two parables explained the wisdom of his course: first, that a patch of new cloth upon a very old garment would only make the weakness of the garment more noticeable, and from the inequality of strength the rent would be made greater; second, that new wine put into old wine-skins, out of which all the stretch and elasticity had gone, would be sure to damage, rather than benefit, for the result would be not only to speedily burst and destroy the old wine-skins, but also to lose the valuable new wine.

Our Lord's new doctrines were the new wine, while the Jewish sects were the old wine-skins. Suppose that our Lord had joined one of those sects and had begun a reform in it: what would have been the result? There can be no doubt that the new truths, if received, would have broken up that sect completely. The power of its organization, built largely upon sectarian pride, and cemented by errors, superstitions and human traditions, would forthwith have been destroyed, and the new doctrines would have been left stranded --hampered, too, by all the old errors and traditions of that sect, and held responsible for its past record by the world in general.

For the same reasons, the Lord here, in the present harvest, in introducing the fuller light of truth, at the dawn of the Millennial age, does not put it as a patch upon any of the old systems, nor as new wine into old skins. First, because none of them are in a fit condition to be patched, or to receive the new doctrines. Second, because the new truths, if received, would soon begin to work, and would develop a power which would burst any sect, no matter how thoroughly organized and bound. If tried, one after another, the result would be the same, and, in the end, the new wine (doctrines) would have none to contain and preserve it.

The proper and best course was the one followed by our Lord at the first advent. He made an entirely new garment out of the new stuff, and put the new wine into new wine-skins; i.e., he called out the Israelites indeed (non-sectarian), and committed to them the truths then due. And so now: he is calling out the truth-hungry from nominal spiritual Israel; and it becomes them to accept the truth in the Lord's own way, and to cooperate with him heartily in his plan, no matter which, or how many, of the old wine-skins are passed by and rejected as unfit to contain it. Rejoice, rather, that you are counted worthy to have this new wine of present truth testified to you, and, as fast as proved, receive it and act upon it gladly.

Those who at the first advent waited to learn the opinion and follow the lead of prominent sectarians, and who inquired, "Have any of the scribes or Pharisees believed on him?" did not receive the truth, because they were followers of men rather than of God; for prominent sectarians then did not accept of Christ's teaching, and the same class always have been, and still are, the blindest leaders of the blind. Instead of accepting the truth and being blessed, they "fall" in the time of trial. The old garment and the old wine-skins are so out of condition as to be totally unfit for further use.

Since it is the Lord who calls his people out of Babylon, we cannot doubt that, whatever may be his agencies for giving the call, all truly his people will hear it; and not only will their obedience be tested by the call, but also their love of Babylon and affinity for her errors will be tested. If they approve her doctrines, methods, etc., so as to be loathe to leave her, they will prove themselves unworthy of present truth, and deserving of her coming plagues. But the words of the call indicate that God's true people in Babylon are

not to be considered as implicated in her sins of worldliness and ignoring of divine truth, **up to the time** they shall learn that Babylon is fallen--cast off. Then, if they continue **in her**, they are esteemed as being **of her**, in the sense of approving her wrong deeds and doctrines, past and present, and shall be counted as **partakers** of her sins, and therefore meriting a share of their punishment, the plagues coming upon her. See *Rev. 18:4*.

How strong the expression, "She is become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." How true it is, that the most execrable of society seek and wear the garb of Christian profession and ceremonialism, in some of the various quarters (sects) of Babylon. Every impure principle and doctrine, somehow and somewhere, finds representation in her. And she is a "cage" which holds securely not only the Lord's meek and gentle doves, but also many unclean and hateful birds. Of all the defaulters, and deceivers of men and of women, how many are professedly members of Christ's Church! and how many even use their profession as a cloak under which to forward evil schemes! It is well known that a majority of even the most brutal criminals executed die in the Roman Catholic communion.

Babylon has contained both the best and the worst, both the cream and the dregs, of the population of the civilized world. The cream is the small class of truly consecrated ones, sadly mixed up with the great mass of mere professors and the filthy, criminal dregs; but under favorable conditions the cream class will be separated in the present harvest, preparatory to being glorified.

As an illustration of the proportion of the unclean and hateful birds, in and out of Babylon, note the following official report of the condition of society in a quarter of the wheatfield where "Orthodoxy" has for centuries boasted of

the fine quality and purity of its wheat and the fewness of its tares, and where "The Church," so-called, has been associated with the government in making the laws and in ruling the people:

## The Status of Society in England and Wales

### Parliamentary Report Made in 1873

#### Population by Religious Professions

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Roman Catholics.....                              | 1,500,000 |
| Church of England.....                            | 6,933,935 |
| Dissenters [Protestants other than Episcopalians] |           |
| .....   | 7,234,158 |
| Infidels.....                                     | 7,000,000 |
| Jews.....   | 57,000    |

#### Total Number of Criminals in Jails

|                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| Roman Catholics.....   | 37,300  |
| Church of England..... | 96,600  |
| Dissenters.....        | 10,800  |
| Infidels.....          | 350     |
| Jews.....              | 0       |
|                        | -----   |
|                        | 145,050 |

#### Criminals to Every 100,000 Population

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Roman Catholics.....   | 2,500 |
| Church of England..... | 1,400 |
| Dissenters.....        | 150   |
| Infidels.....          | 5     |
| Jews.....              | 0     |

#### Proportion of Criminals

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Roman Catholics.....   | 1 in 40     |
| Church of England..... | 1 in 72     |
| Dissenters.....        | 1 in 666    |
| Infidels.....          | 1 in 20,000 |

## C164

The cause of this mixed condition is stated: "Babylon made all the peoples drunk with the wine [spirit, influence] of her fornication"--worldly affiliation. (*Rev. 18:3*) False teachings concerning the character and mission of the Church, and the claim that the time for her exaltation and reign had come (and particularly after the great boom of success which her worldly ambition received in the time of Constantine, when she claimed to be the Kingdom of God **set up** to reign in power and great glory), led many into Babylon, who would never have united with her had she continued in the narrow way of sacrifice. Pride and ambition led to the grasping of worldly power by the early Church. To obtain the power, numbers and worldly influence were necessary. And to obtain the numbers, which, under present conditions, the truth never would have drawn, false doctrines were broached, and finally obtained the ascendancy over all others; and even truths which were still retained were disfigured and distorted. The numbers came, even to hundreds of millions, and the true Church, the wheat, still but a "little flock," was hidden among the millions of tares. Here, as sheep in the midst of devouring wolves, the true embryo Kingdom of God suffered violence, and the violent took it by force; and, like their Lord, in whose footprints they followed, they were despised and rejected of men, men of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

But now, as the Millennial morning dawns, and the doctrinal errors of the dark night past are discovered, and the real gems of truth are lighted up, the effect must be, as designed, to separate completely the wheat from the tares. And, as false doctrines produced the improper development, so the unfolding of truth in the light of harvest will produce the separation. All of the tares and some of the wheat are fearful, however. To them it seems that the dissolution of Babylon would be the overthrow of God's work,

## C165

and the failure of his cause. But not so: the tares never were wheat, and God never proposed to recognize them as such. He merely permitted, "let," them both grow together until the harvest. It is from Babylon's "cage" of unclean birds that God's people are called out, that they may both enjoy the liberty and share the harvest light and work, and prove

themselves out of harmony with her errors of doctrine and practice, and thus escape them and their reward--the plagues coming upon all remaining in her.

These plagues or troubles, foreshadowed in the troubles upon the rejected Jewish house, are pictured in such lurid symbols in the book of Revelation that many students have very exaggerated and wild ideas on this subject, and are therefore unprepared for the realities now closely impending. They often interpret the symbols literally, and hence are unprepared to see them fulfilled as they will be--by religious, social and political disturbances, controversies, upheavals, reactions, revolutions, etc.

But note another item here. Between the time when Babylon is cast off, falls from favor (1878), and the time when the plagues or troubles come upon her, is a brief interval, during which the faithful of the Lord's people are all to be informed on this subject, and gathered out of Babylon. This is clearly shown in the same verse; for with the message, "Babylon is fallen," is coupled the call, "Come out of her, **my people**, that ye...receive not of her [**coming**] plagues." This same interval of time, and the same work to be accomplished in it, are also referred to in symbol, in *Rev. 7:3*. To the messenger of wrath the command is given, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, **until we have SEALED** the servants of our God in their foreheads." The forehead sealing indicates that a mental comprehension of the truth will be the mark or seal which will separate and distinguish the servants of God from the servants and votaries

## C166

of Babylon. And this agrees with Daniel's testimony: "The wise [of thy people] shall understand; but none of the wicked [unfaithful to their covenant] shall understand." (*Dan. 12:10*) Thus the classes are to be marked and separated before the plagues come upon rejected, cast off Babylon.

And that this **knowledge** is to be both a sealing and a separating agent is clearly implied in the verse before considered; for the declaration is first made, that "Babylon is fallen," and that certain plagues or punishments are coming upon her, before the Lord's people are expected to obey the command, "Come out," **based upon that knowledge**. Indeed, we know that all must be well "sealed in their foreheads"--intelligently informed--concerning God's plan, before they can rightly appreciate or obey this command.

And is it not apparent that this very work of sealing the

servants of God is now progressing? Are we not being sealed in our foreheads? and that, too, at the very proper time? Are we not being led, step by step, as by the Lord's own hand--by his Word--to an appreciation of truth and affairs in general from his standpoint--reversing our former opinions derived from other sources, on many subjects? Is it not true that the various divisions or sects of Babylon have not been the channels through which this sealing has come to us, but rather that they have been hindrances which prevented its speedier accomplishment? And do we not see the propriety of it, as well as of the Lord's declaration, that a separation of wheat and tares must occur in the harvest? And do we not see it to be his plan, to reveal the facts to his faithful, and then to expect them to show their hearty sympathy with that plan by prompt obedience? What if to obey and come out obliges us to leave behind the praise of men, or a comfortable salary, or a parsonage home, or financial aids in business, or domestic peace, or what not?--

#### C167

yet let us not fear. He who says to us "Come!" is the same who said "Come!" to Peter when he walked on the sea. Peter, in obeying, would have sunk, had not the Lord's outstretched arm upheld him; and the same arm supports them well who now, at his command, come out of Babylon. Look not at the boisterous sea of difficulties between, but, looking directly to the Lord, be of good courage.

The command is Come, not Go; because in coming out of bondage to human traditions, and creeds, and systems, and errors, we are **coming directly to our Lord**, to be taught and fed by him, to be strengthened and perfected to do all his pleasure, and to **stand**, and not to **fall** with Babylon.

God's Word reveals the fact that the nominal church, after its fall from his favor and from being his mouthpiece (*Rev. 3:16*), will gradually settle into a condition of unbelief, in which the Bible will eventually be entirely ignored in fact, though retained in name, and in which philosophic speculations of various shades will be the real creeds. From this fall the faithful sealed ones will escape; for they will be "accounted **worthy** to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand"--not fall, in the time of the Lord's presence. (*Luke 21:36*) In fact, many are already thus settling--retaining the forms of worship, and faith in a Creator and in a future life, but viewing these chiefly through their own or other men's philosophies and theories, and ignoring the Bible as an infallible teacher of the divine purposes.

These, while retaining the Bible, disbelieve its narratives, especially that of Eden and the fall. Retaining the name of Jesus, and calling him the Christ and the Savior, they regard him merely as an excellent though not infallible exemplar, and reject entirely his ransom-sacrifice--his cross. Claiming the Fatherhood of God to extend to sinners, they repudiate both the curse and the Mediator.

It has not been generally observed that at the first advent

## C168

our Lord's ministry of three and a half years, up to the casting off of the Jewish nation (their church and nation being one), was a trial or testing of that polity or system **as a whole**, rather than of its **individual** members. Its clerical class--Priests, Scribes and Pharisees--represented that system as a whole. They themselves claimed thus to represent Judaism (*John 7:48,49*), and the people so regarded them; hence the force of the inquiry, Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed on him? And our Lord so recognized them: he rarely rebuked **the people** for failure to receive him, but repeatedly held responsible the "blind leaders," who would neither enter into the Kingdom themselves, nor permit the people, who otherwise would have received Jesus as Messiah and King, to do so.

Our Lord's constant effort was to avoid publicity--to prevent his miracles and teachings from inciting **the people**, lest they should take him by force, and make him king (*John 6:15*); and yet he constantly brought these testimonies or evidences of his authority and Messiahship to the notice of the Jewish clergy, up to the time when, their trial as a church-nation being ended, their house or system was cast off, "left desolate." Then, by his direction and under the apostles' teachings, all efforts were directed to the people individually; and the cast off church-organization and its officers, as such, were wholly ignored.

In evidence that during his ministry, and until their system was rejected, the teachers and priests represented it, note the Lord's course with the cleansed leper, as recorded in *Matt. 8:4*. Jesus said to him, "**See thou tell no man**; but go thy way, show thyself **to the priest** and offer the gift that Moses commanded, **for a testimony unto THEM.**" The evidence or testimony was to be hidden from the people for a time, but to be promptly given to **their "rulers,"** who represented the Jewish church in the trial then in progress.

## C169

We should notice particularly the object and results of the trial of the Jewish church as a system, because of their typical bearing upon the present trial of the Gospel Church, as well as their relationship toward the entire plan of God. They professed, in harmony with God's promises, to be the people **ready** for the coming Messiah, the people whom he would organize, empower, direct and use as his "**own people**," in blessing all the other nations of the earth, by bringing all to a full knowledge of God and to opportunities of harmony with his righteous laws. God, though by his foreknowledge aware that Fleshly Israel would be unfit for the chief place in this great work, nevertheless gave them every opportunity and advantage the same as though he were ignorant of the results. Meanwhile he disclosed his foreknowledge in prophetic statements which they could not comprehend, lest **we** should suppose that he had experimented, and failed, in his dealings with the Jewish people.

So long as Israel as a church-nation claimed to be ready, waiting and anxious to carry out their part of the program, it was but just that they should be **tested**, before God's further plan should go into effect. That further plan was, that when the natural seed of Abraham should, by their testing, be proved unfit for the chief honor promised and sought, then an election or selection should be made, during the Gospel age, of individuals worthy of the high honor of being the promised seed of Abraham, and joint-heirs with Messiah in the promised Kingdom, which would lift up and bless all the families of the earth. *Gal. 3:16,27-29,14*

The "seventy-weeks" (490 years) of divine favor promised to the Jewish people could not fail of fulfilment; and hence in no sense could Gentiles, or even Samaritans, be invited to become disciples, or in any sense to be associated with the Kingdom which Christ and the apostles preached. (*Acts 3:26*) "**It was necessary** that the word of God [the invitation

## C170

to share the Kingdom] should **first** have been preached **to you**," said Paul, addressing Jews. (*Acts 13:46*) "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; and again: "I am not sent, except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," said the Master, sending forth his disciples. *Matt. 10:5; 15:24*

The entire "seventieth week," in the midst of which

Christ died--the seven years from the beginning of our Lord's ministry to the sending of Peter to preach to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert--was set apart by God's arrangement for the Jewish trial. But instead of testing them as a whole (as a church-nation) all of those seven years, that testing was "cut short in righteousness"--that is, not to their disadvantage, but to their advantage. Because it was evident, not only to God but to men also, that the Pharisees, priests and scribes not only rejected, but toward the last hated, the Lord Jesus and sought to kill him; therefore, when the time had come for him to offer himself publicly as **King**, riding to them on the ass, when not received by the representatives of the church-nation, the King promptly disowned that system, though the common people received him gladly and insisted on his recognition as king. (*Mark 12:37*) Thus our Lord cut short the further useless trial, in order that the remainder of that "seventieth week" might be spent specially and exclusively upon the **people**, the **individuals** of that cast-off system--before the efforts of the ministers of the new dispensation should be distributed broadcast to all nations. And it was so; for our Lord, after his resurrection, when telling his disciples that their efforts need no longer be confined to Jews only, but might be extended to "all nations," was particular to add--"**beginning at Jerusalem.**" (*Luke 24:47*) And he knew well that their Jewish ideas would hinder them from going beyond the Jews until

#### C171

he should in due time open the way--as he did at the end of their favor, by sending Peter to Cornelius. Since that time, individual Jews and Gentiles have shared the privileges of God's favor equally, both being alike acceptable, in and through Christ; for in the present call "there is no difference" so far as God is concerned--the difference unfavorable to the Jew being his own prejudice against accepting, as a **gift** through Christ, the blessings once offered him upon condition of his actual compliance with the full letter and spirit of God's law, which none in the fallen state could fulfil.

That "seventieth week," with all the particulars of the testing of Fleshly Israel, not only accomplished the purpose of testing that system, but it also and specially furnished a typical representation of a similar testing of the nominal Gospel Church or Spiritual Israel, called "Christendom" and "Babylon," during seven corresponding years, which began the harvest of the Gospel age--the period from October

1874 to October 1881. "Christendom," "Babylon," professes to see the failure of its prototype, Fleshly Israel, and claims to be the true **spiritual** seed of Abraham, and to be ready, waiting and anxious to convert the heathen world, and to righteously rule and teach and bless all nations, just as the Jewish system professed. The present is like the typical age, also, in the fact that the leaders then had generally come to regard the promises of a coming Messiah as figurative expressions; and only the commoner class of the people expected a **personal** Messiah. The learned among the Jews, then, ignored an individual Messiah, and expected that their church-nation would triumph over others by reason of its superior laws, and thus fulfil all that the common people supposed would require a personal Messiah to accomplish. (And this is the view that is still held by "learned" Jewish teachers, or Rabbis, who interpret the Messianic

## C172

prophecies as applicable to their church-nation, and not to an individual Savior of the world. Even the prophecies which refer to the sufferings of Christ they apply to their sufferings as a people.) Carrying out their theory, they were sending missionaries throughout the world, to convert the world to the Law of Moses, expecting thus to reach and "bless all the families of the earth," aside from a personal Messiah. To such an extent was this the case, that our Lord remarked it, saying, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte."

How similar to this is the theory of nominal "Christendom" today. The common people, when their attention is drawn to the fact that the Lord promised to come again, and that the apostles and prophets predicted that the Millennium, or Times of Restitution, would result from the second coming of the Lord (*Acts 3:19-21*), are inclined to accept the truth and to rejoice in it, just as a similar class did at the first advent. But today, as eighteen hundred years ago, the chief priests and rulers of the people have a more advanced (?) idea. They claim that the promises of Millennial blessedness, of peace on earth and good will among men, can and must be brought about by their efforts, missions, etc., without the personal coming of the Lord Jesus; and thus they make void the promises of the second advent and the coming Kingdom.

The present chief priests and rulers, the "clergy" of "Christendom," deceiving themselves as well as the people, claim, and seemingly believe, that their missionary efforts

are just about to succeed, and that, without the Lord, they are now upon the eve of introducing to the world all the Millennial blessings portrayed in the Scriptures.

The foundation of this delusion lies partly in the fact that the increase of knowledge and of running to and fro in the earth, incident to this "Day of His Preparation," have been

### **C173**

specially favorable to the spread of the commerce of civilized nations, and the consequent increase of worldly prosperity. The credit of all this Babylon coolly appropriates to herself, pointing out all these advantages as the results of her Christianizing and energizing influences. She proudly points to the "Christian nation" of Great Britain, and to her wealth and prosperity, as results of her Christian principles. But what are the facts? Every step of progress which that nation or any other nation has made has been only to the extent of the effort exercised to cast off the yoke of Babylon's oppression. In proportion as Great Britain threw off the fetters of Papal oppression, she has prospered; and in proportion as she continued to hold and to be influenced by the Papal doctrines of church and state union, of divinely appointed kingly and priestly authority and oppression, and to submit to the tyranny of greed and selfishness, to that extent is she degraded still.

Greed for gold and ambition for power were the energies by which the ports of heathen lands were reluctantly opened up to the commerce of so-called Christian nations, to English and German rum and opium, and to American whiskey and tobacco. The love of God and the blessing of the heathen nations had no place in these efforts. Here is an apparently small item of current history that ought to startle the consciences of so-called Christian nations, if they have any. The Mohammedan Emir of Nupe, West Africa, recently sent the following message to Bishop Crowther, of the Niger mission:

"It is not a long matter; it is about barasa [rum]. Barasa, barasa, barasa! It has ruined our country; it has ruined our people very much; it has made our people mad. I beg you, Malam Kip, don't forget this writing; because we all beg that he [Crowther] should ask the great priests [the committee of the Anglican Church Mission Society] that they

**C174**

should beg the English Queen [Head of the Church of England] to prevent bringing barasa into this land.

"For God and the Prophet's sake! For God and the Prophet, his messenger's sake, he must help us in this matter --that of barasa. Tell him, may God bless him in his work. This is the mouth word from Malike, the Emir of Nupe."

### **Commenting on this a Baptist journal remarks:**

"This humble negro ruler reveals in this letter a concern for his people which Christian monarchs and governments have not yet reached; for no European Christian ruler, and no President of the United States, has ever yet so appealed in behalf of his people. In all the addresses opening Parliaments, in all the Presidential messages, no such passage has ever been found. All shame to our Christian rulers! Gain, the accursed hunger for gold, is the law with merchants; and these are the darlings and lords of governments."

Then, in the name of truth, we ask, Why call these Christian governments? And the government of the United States is no exception, though so many persist in denominating it a Christian government, while properly it does not recognize the undeserved title, though urged to do so by zealous sectarians. From Boston, vast cargoes of rum are continually sent to Africa, unchecked by the government, and with its full permission, while it grants licenses to tens of thousands to manufacture and deal out to its own citizens the terrible "fire-water," made doubly injurious and seductive by what is called rectifying, that is, by the legalized mixture of the rankest poisons. All this, and much more, is justified and defended by "Christian" statesmen and rulers of so-called Christian nations, for **revenue**--as the easiest way of collecting from the people a share of the necessary expenses of the government. Surely this is prostitution of the lowest and worst type. Every thinking man must see how out of place is the name Christian, when applied to even the very best of present governments. The attempt to

**C175**

fit the name Christian to the characters of "the kingdoms of this world," ruled by the "prince of this world"--Satan--and imbued with the "spirit of the world," has perplexed all truly Christian hearts, deluded by this error of supposing

the present governments of the world to be in any sense Christ's Kingdom.

## Says Cannon Farrar in the Contemporary Review:

"The old rapacity of the slave-trade has been followed by the greedier and more ruinous rapacity of the drink-seller. Our fathers tore from the neck of Africa a yoke of whips: we have subjected the native races to a yoke of scorpions. We have opened the rivers of Africa to commerce, only to pour down them the raging phlegethon of alcohol, than which no river of the Inferno is more blood-red or accursed. Is the conscience of the nation dead?"

We answer, No! The nation never was Christian, and consequently never had a Christian conscience or a Christian spirit. The **most** that can be said of it is, that the light from God's truly consecrated children has enlightened, refined and shamed into a measure of moral reform the public sentiment of those nations in which they "shine as lights."

In like manner a similarly horrid traffic was forced upon China and Japan, against their earnest protest, by the same Christian (?) governments. In 1840 Great Britain began a war with China, called the "Opium War," to compel the Chinese government, which wished to protect its people from that terrible curse, to admit that article. The war resulted favorably to the devil's side of the question. British warships destroyed thousands of lives and homes, and forced the heathen Chinese ruler to open the empire to the slower death of opium--the intoxicant of China. The net revenue of the British government from this drug, after paying large expenses for collecting the revenue, amounted, according to official reports published in 1872,

### C176

to over \$37,000,000 for the preceding year. This, \$37,000,000 per year, was the inspiring cause of that war, the very reverse of love for either the present or future welfare of the Chinese. The clause in the treaty providing protection to Christian missionaries was merely a morsel cunningly thrown in to appease the consciences of justice-loving people--to make a great crime appear to be a mercy, in kindness done. In the treaty at the end of the war, certain ports were made free to British trade, and similar treaties

with other nations followed, and some good results were thereby secured. One of these was the opening of China to civilizing influences. But the fact that a few Christian men and women stepped to the front to teach the people some of the principles of righteousness is not to be reflected to the credit of the **British nation**, whose object was trade, and which, for greed of gold, and not for the good of the Chinese or the glory of God, waged an unholy and unjust war upon a people not so skilled in the devilish art.

Along with other vices, "Christendom" has taught the nations the worst form of idolatry, the idolatry of self and wealth and power, for which professedly Christian men and nations are willing to defraud, to injure and even to kill one another. It has also taught them blasphemy and sacrilege in every language; for every ship's crew, from every professedly Christian nation, blasphemes the name of Christ. But, while such has been the influence of the so-called Christian nations, from their midst have also gone some noble missionaries of the cross, some real servants of God, and also some less noble, the servants of men--in all, however, but a mere handful--to tell the heathen about Christ and real civilization.

It is not the earnest missionaries but the sanguine home officers of missionary societies, who have little idea of, and often little actual interest in, the real situation in foreign lands, and whose views are based mainly upon the large

#### C177

sum annually collected and expended, who think the heathen world almost converted, and their efforts about to eventuate in the promised Millennial blessings, without the Lord's second coming. Missionaries who have been to the front confess, generally, to great discouragement, except when they can stimulate their hope out of all proportion to actual experience and sound judgment. Thus, one such--Rev. J. C. R. Ewing, D. D.--who had spent nine years in mission work in India, in delivering a discourse recently before the Young Men's Christian Association of Pittsburgh, Pa., admitted that the **present** effect of civilization and missionary effort is not only to break down the heathen religions, but to abolish all religious faith and to make the people infidels. But his strong hope is that the next step will be from Infidelity to Christianity--an unreasonable hope, surely, as all experience here, in civilized lands, most certainly proves. We extract from the public press reports of his discourse, as follows:

"India owes more to the direct and indirect influences of Christianity than to any other one thing. It has done much to break down the old idea of material gods, and in its stead to set up the idea of a single supreme God, that the people of the West [Europe and America] entertain. [A more explicit statement would be that they are receiving the idea, common to Atheism, that Nature is the supreme and only God.]

"Among the 263,000,000 of people in that country there are 10,000,000 young men who speak the English language and are instructed in the Western ideas that we are taught. The higher caste are thoroughly learned in the literature, the religion and the sciences that are the basis of the education of the people of this country. The old idea of a vengeful God, who must be propitiated by numerous gifts and many prayers, has given way to the modern spirit of Infidelity. The educated men of the East no longer believe in the gods of their fathers. They have abandoned them forever, and replaced them with the teachings of Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll,

#### **C178**

of Paine, of Voltaire, of Bradlaugh and of every other atheistical and pantheistical teacher. This skeptical age will soon pass away, and the West, just as it has given India her ideas, will give her the religion of the Christian God.

"The young men of India are well educated, acute observers, intelligent, well posted in all the affairs of other nations besides their own, and, though it may seem strange, well acquainted with our Bible. Indeed, they know it so well that none but a man thoroughly conversant with its teachings, and the Christian theology, could hope to be able to successfully answer all the objections they bring forward against it. The popular idea, that a missionary sits in the shade of a tree and teaches naked savages who gather around him, is an exploded one. In India the missionary meets intelligent and educated men, and he must be well equipped to influence them. They are, besides being intelligent, a fine looking people, amiable, courteous, gentlemanly, and treat all foreigners with the greatest consideration and respect."

The obstinate facts he cites certainly do not warrant the gentleman's unreasonable hopes. Experience has surely proved that the bungling arguments of sectarianism, whose errors distort and vitiate what truth they possess, seldom

make converts of either honest or scoffing skeptics. Surely, all but the blind can see that if the **ten hundred millions** of heathendom were converted to the condition of the **four hundred millions\*** of so-called Christendom, the question would be an open one, as it was in the Jewish age (*Matt. 23:15*), whether they would not be two-fold more fit for destruction than they were in their original heathen superstitions. Surely no sane mind could claim that conversion to such a condition as that of so-called Christendom would fulfil the description of the Millennial peace and good will, foretold

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\*Of these 400,000,000, Roman and Greek Catholics together claim 280,000,000, while Protestants claim 120,000,000.

**C179**

by the prophets, and briefly summed up in our Lord's prayer, in the words, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, **as it is done in heaven.**" *Luke 11:2*

Is it at all surprising that this mass of **four hundred millions**, professedly constituting the Church of Christ, and calling itself his Kingdom--"Christendom"--is disowned by the Lord, and by him given the more appropriate name, Babylon (mixture, confusion)? And is it any wonder that with their ideas of the Kingdom of Christ, and of the manner and results of its spread throughout the world, these should be unprepared for the real Kingdom, and unwilling to receive the new King, as, for similar reasons, the rulers of the typical house were unprepared at the first advent? Nor can it be doubted that those emperors, kings and princes who now use influence and power chiefly for self-aggrandizement, and who equip and maintain millions of armed men to protect and to continue them in their imperial extravagances and lordly positions, would rather see millions slaughtered, and other millions made widows and orphans, as in the past, than that they should part with their present advantages. Is it any wonder that these should neither desire, nor expect, nor believe in the kind of Kingdom promised in the Scriptures?--a kingdom in which the high and lofty and proud shall be brought low, and the lowly lifted up to the general, proper and designed level? Is it any wonder that all in sympathy with any kind of oppression, extortion, or grinding monopoly, by which they obtain, or hope to obtain, unjust advantage over their fellow-creatures, would be slow to believe in the Kingdom of righteousness in which no injustice and overreaching will be permitted? Especially,

can we wonder that such are slow to believe this Kingdom nigh, even at the doors?

Nor can we wonder that the great ones, the chief priests and rulers of "Christendom," looking each to gain from his own quarter or sect (*Isa. 56:11*), fail to recognize, and therefore

#### **C180**

reject, the spiritual King now present, as the teachers of the fleshly house rejected him when present in the flesh. And as the Lord rejected, cut off and cast away from favor, into a fire of trouble, many of the "natural branches" of the olive tree, preserving only the Israelites indeed as branches, do we not see that, in the harvest of this age, the same wisdom tests the "wild branches" also (*Rom. 11:21,22*), and cuts off from favor and fatness of the root [the Abrahamic promise] this great mass of professed branches, whose character and aims and dispositions are foreign and wild indeed --very different from the promise and plan of God represented in the root?

It is not strange that the present harvest witnesses the separation of true Christians from mere professors, as in the Jewish harvest a separation of Israelites indeed from mere professors was accomplished. It is only what we might reasonably have expected, even had there been no revelation made to us in God's Word, showing the fact of the rejection of the mass, as Babylon. Compare *Rom. 11:20-22* with *Rev. 3:16; 18:4*.

The rejection of Babylon ("Christendom"), in 1878, was the rejection of the mass of professors--the "host," as it is termed by Daniel, to distinguish it from the sanctuary or temple class. The sanctuary class will not be given up, nor left desolate. No, thank God, the sanctuary is to be glorified; the glory of the Lord is to fill his temple, when its last living stone is polished and approved and set in place. (*1 Pet. 2:5,6*) We have seen how such a sanctuary class has existed throughout the age, how it was defiled, and its precious vessels (doctrines) profaned, and how its cleansing from error has been gradually effected. This class had all along been the real Church, even while the nominal systems were still in a measure recognized and to some extent used. After the rejection of the nominal systems, however,

#### **C181**

now as in the Jewish harvest, the real Church or Sanctuary class alone is recognized and used as God's mouthpiece.

Caiaphas, a chief-priest of Fleshly Israel, was used as the agent of God to deliver a great lesson and prophecy only a few days before that system was cast off. (See *John 11:50,51,55; 18:14.*) But we have no intimation in the Scriptures, nor any reason for supposing, that God ever used or recognized that church-nation, its rulers and representatives, after it was cast off. And this same lesson should be recognized, here, in connection with Babylon. She is "spewed out" of the Lord's mouth; and neither the voice of the Bridegroom nor of the bride shall be heard **in her** any more **forever. Rev. 18:23**

It is in vain that some attempt to make a plea for their quarter of Babylon, and, while admitting the general correctness of the prophetic portrait, to claim that their sect, or their particular congregation, is an exception to the general character of Babylon, and that, therefore, the Lord cannot be calling upon them to withdraw from it formally and publicly, as they once joined it.

Let such consider that we are now in the harvest time of separation, and remember our Lord's expressed reason for calling us out of Babylon, namely, "that ye be not partakers of her sins." Consider, again, why Babylon is so named. Evidently, because of her many errors of doctrine, which, mixed with a few elements of divine truth, make great confusion, and because of the mixed company brought together by the mixed truths and errors. And since they will hold the errors at a sacrifice of truth, the latter is made void, and often worse than meaningless. This sin, of holding and teaching error at the sacrifice of truth is one of which every sect of the Church nominal is guilty, without exception. Where is the sect which will assist you in diligently searching the Scriptures, to grow thereby in grace and in the

## **C182**

knowledge of the truth? Where is the sect which will not hinder your growth, both by its doctrines and its usages? Where is the sect in which you can obey the Master's words and let your light shine? We know of none.

If any of God's children in these organizations do not realize their bondage, it is because they do not attempt to use their liberty, because they are asleep at their posts of duty, when they should be active stewards and faithful watchmen. (*1 Thess. 5:5,6*) Let them wake up and attempt to use the liberty they think they possess; let them show to their fellow-worshippers wherein their creeds fall short of the divine plan, wherein they diverge from it and run in direct

opposition to it; let them show how Jesus Christ by the favor of God tasted death for **every man**; how this fact, and the blessings flowing from it, shall "in due time" be testified to every man; how in "the times of refreshing" the blessings of restitution shall flow to the whole human race. Let them show further the high calling of the Gospel Church, the rigid conditions of membership in that body, and the special mission of the Gospel age to take out this peculiar "people for his name," which in due time is to be exalted and to reign with Christ. Those who will thus attempt to use their liberty to preach the good tidings in the synagogues of today will succeed either in converting whole congregations, or else in awakening a storm of opposition. They will surely cast you out of their synagogues, and separate you from their company, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for Christ's sake. And, in so doing, doubtless, many will feel that they are doing God service. But, if thus faithful, you will be more than comforted in the precious promises of *Isaiah 66:5* and *Luke 6:22*--"Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word: **Your brethren** that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified [we do this for the Lord's glory]: but he

### C183

shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."  
"Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets." But, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you; for so did their fathers to the **false** prophets."

If all with whom you worship as a congregation are saints--if all are wheat, with no tares among them--you have met a most remarkable people, who will receive the harvest truths gladly. But if not, you must expect present truth to separate the tares from the wheat. And more, you must do your share in presenting these very truths which will accomplish the separation.

If you would be one of the overcoming saints, you must now be one of the "reapers" to thrust in the sickle of truth. If faithful to the Lord, worthy of the truth and worthy of joint-heirship with him in glory, you will rejoice to share with the Chief Reaper in the present harvest work--no matter how disposed you may be, naturally, to glide smoothly

through the world.

If there are tares among the wheat in the congregation of which you are a member, as is always the case, much will depend upon which is in the majority. If the wheat preponderates, the truth, wisely and lovingly presented, will affect them favorably; and the tares will not long care to stay. But if the majority are tares--as nine-tenths or more generally are--the effect of the most careful and kind presentation of the harvest truth will be to awaken bitterness and strong opposition; and, if you persist in declaring the good tidings, and in exposing the long established errors, you will soon be "cast out" for the good of the sectarian

#### C184

cause, or have your liberties so restrained that you cannot let your light shine in that congregation. Your duty then is plain: Deliver your loving testimony to the goodness and wisdom of the Lord's great plan of the ages, and, wisely and meekly giving your reasons, publicly withdraw from them.

There are various degrees of bondage among the different sects of Babylon--"Christendom." Some who would indignantly resent the utter and absolute slavery of individual conscience and judgment, required by Romanism, are quite willing to be bound themselves, and anxious to get others bound, by the creeds and dogmas of one or another of the Protestant sects. True, their chains are lighter and longer than those of Rome and the Dark Ages. So far as it goes, this surely is good--reformation truly--a step in the right direction--**toward** full liberty--toward the condition of the Church in the apostolic times. But why wear human shackles at all? Why bind and limit our consciences at all? Why not stand fast in the full liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free? Why not reject all the efforts of fallible fellowmen to fetter conscience and hinder investigation?--not only the efforts of the remote past, of the Dark Ages, but the efforts of the various reformers of the more recent past? Why not conclude to be as was the apostolic Church?--free to **grow** in knowledge as well as in grace and love, as the Lord's "due time" reveals his gracious plan more and more fully?

Surely all know that whenever they join any of these human organizations, accepting its **Confession of Faith** as theirs, they bind themselves to believe neither more nor less than that creed expresses on the subject. If, in spite of the bondage thus voluntarily yielded to, they should think for themselves, and receive light from other sources, in advance of the light enjoyed by the sect they have joined, they must either

prove untrue to the sect and to their covenant with it, to believe nothing contrary to its Confession, or else they

#### C185

must honestly cast aside and repudiate the Confession which they have outgrown, and come out of such a sect. To do this requires grace and costs some effort, disrupting, as it often does, pleasant associations, and exposing the honest truth-seeker to the silly charges of being a "traitor" to his sect, a "turncoat," one "not established," etc. When one joins a sect, his mind is supposed to be given up entirely to that sect, and henceforth not his own. The sect undertakes to decide for him what is truth and what is error; and he, to be a true, staunch, faithful member, must accept the decisions of his sect, future as well as past, on all religious matters, ignoring his own individual thought, and avoiding personal investigation, lest he grow in knowledge, and be lost as a member of such sect. This slavery of conscience to a sect and creed is often stated in so many words, when such a one declares that he "**belongs**" to such a sect.

These shackles of sectarianism, so far from being rightly esteemed as shackles and bonds, are esteemed and worn as ornaments, as badges of respect and marks of character. So far has the delusion gone, that many of God's children would be ashamed to be known to be without some such chains--light or heavy in weight, long or short in the personal liberty granted. They are ashamed to say that they are not in bondage to any sect or creed, but "**belong**" to Christ only.

Hence it is that we sometimes see an honest, truth-hungry child of God gradually progressing from one denomination to another, as a child passes from class to class in a school. If he be in the Church of Rome, when his eyes are opened, he gets out of it, probably falling into some branch of the Methodist or Presbyterian systems. If here his desire for truth be not entirely quenched and his spiritual senses stupefied with the spirit of the world, you may a few years after find him in some of the branches of the Baptist

#### C186

system; and, if he still continues to grow in grace and knowledge and love of truth, and into an appreciation of the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, you may by and by find him outside of all human organizations, joined merely to the Lord and to his saints, bound only by the tender but

strong ties of love and truth, like the early Church. *1 Cor. 6:15,17; Eph. 4:15,16*

The feeling of uneasiness and insecurity, if not bound by the chains of some sect, is general. It is begotten of the false idea, first promulgated by Papacy, that membership in an earthly organization is essential, pleasing to the Lord and necessary to everlasting life. These earthly, humanly organized systems, so different from the simple, unfettered **associations** of the days of the apostles, are viewed involuntarily and almost unconsciously by Christian people as so many Heaven Insurance Companies, to **some one of which** money, time, respect, etc., must be paid regularly, to secure heavenly rest and peace after death. Acting on this false idea, people are almost as nervously anxious to be bound by another sect, if they step out of one, as they are if their policy of insurance has expired, to have it renewed in some respectable company.

But no earthly organization can grant a passport to heavenly glory. The most bigoted sectarian (aside from the Romanist) will not claim, even, that membership in his sect will secure heavenly glory. All are forced to admit that the true Church is the one whose record is kept in heaven, and not on earth. They deceive the people by claiming that it is **needful** to come to Christ through them--**needful** to become members of some sectarian body in order to become members of "the body of Christ," the true Church. On the contrary, the Lord, while he has not refused any who came to him through sectarianism, and has turned no true seeker

### C187

away empty, tells us that we need no such hindrances, but could much better have come to him direct. He cries, "Come unto **me**"; "take my yoke upon you, and learn of me"; "my yoke is easy and my burden is light, and ye shall find rest to your souls." Would that we had given heed to his voice sooner. We would have avoided many of the heavy burdens of sectism, many of its bogs of despair, many of its doubting castles, its vanity fairs, its lions of worldly-mindedness, etc.

Many, however, born in the various sects, or transplanted in infancy or childhood, without questioning the systems, have grown free in heart, and unconsciously beyond the limits and bounds of the creeds they acknowledge by their profession and support with their means and influence. Few of these have recognized the advantages of full liberty, or the drawbacks of sectarian bondage. Nor was

the full, complete separation enjoined until now, in the harvest time. Now the Lord's words are heard, Come out from among them: be ye clean (free, both from wrong practices and from false doctrines), ye who bear the vessels (truths--doctrines) of the Lord. *Isa. 52:11*

Now the ax is laid to the root of the nominal Christian system--Babylon, "Christendom"--as it was to the nominal Jewish system at the first advent; and the great system in which the "fowl of heaven" delight to roost, and which they have grievously befouled (*Luke 13:18,19*), and which has in fact become "a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (*Rev. 18:2*), is to be hewn down, and shall deceive the world no longer. Instead, the true olive tree, whose roots are the true promises of God, and whose branches are the truly and fully consecrated and faithful ones of this Gospel age, whose names are "**written in heaven**," will be seen to be the true and only joint-heir and Bride of the Lamb. *Rev. 17:14*

**C188**

## **The Testing and Sifting of the Sanctuary Class**

Though coming out of Babylon is one step, and a long one, in the direction of complete overcoming, it is by no means the last one; and we should be careful to guard against a disposition to rest after every advance step of the way.

"Ne'er think the victory won,  
Nor once at ease sit down:  
Thine arduous work will not be done  
Till thou hast gained thy crown.

"A cloud of witnesses around  
Hold thee in full survey.  
Forget the steps already trod,  
And onward urge thy way."

The step out of Babylon has generally been preceded by other steps of obedience, which in turn have exercised and strengthened the character for subsequent conflicts and victories. And it will be followed by various other tests and opportunities for overcoming, in view of which Paul (*Gal. 5:1*) wrote, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with a yoke of bondage." Every one who comes to realize the liberty of the sons of God and full freedom from Babylon's bondage

should expect to meet other attempts of the great adversary to bring him into other bondages, or to stumble him. The Lord permits these severe testings, that the class now sought may be manifested, and prepared for his service in the Kingdom of glory.

An illustration of this testing and sifting took place in the Jewish harvest, foreshadowing what we may expect here. The temple or sanctuary class at the first advent was represented by the Lord's disciples, of whom he said, "Ye are clean, but not all [of you]"; and following the casting off of nominal Israel (A.D. 33) came a severe testing to those representing God's temple, the clean and the unclean, to separate

### **C189**

them. Peter was sifted, and almost failed (*Luke 22:31; Matt. 26:74,75; John 21:15-17*); but, being "clean," true at heart, he was enabled to come off victorious. Judas also was tested, and he proved to be unclean, willing to sell the truth for earthly advantage, to deny the Lord for money, even while kissing him in profession of love.

Just so there is here, in this harvest, a cleansed sanctuary, and, closely associated with it, some who are not clean. And since the casting off of Babylon in 1878, and the call there made, to come out of her, a testing and sifting work has been going on amongst those who have come out. Doubtless Peter and Judas were illustrations of similar classes here, among those who have come out of Babylon, and who have been cleansed from many of her doctrinal pollutions-- a class which remains faithful to the Lord and the truth, and another class which proves unfaithful, which does not follow on to know the Lord, but which turns aside to evil and false doctrines, often worse than those from which they had escaped.

This testing and sifting of the temple class, in this harvest since 1878, were foreshadowed by our Lord's typical act of cleansing the typical temple after assuming the office of King and pronouncing judgment against the nominal Jewish church. After declaring their house left unto them desolate, he proceeded to the temple in Jerusalem, typical of the true temple or sanctuary, and, making a scourge of small cords, he used it in driving out the money changers; and he overturned the tables of them that sold doves.

The scourge of small cords used in that typical act represented the various truths, used in the present harvest among the temple class, to correct and prove, and to separate the unclean. The truths now made manifest reveal so clearly

the perfect will of God, the import of full consecration to his service, and the narrowness of the way which must be traveled

### C190

by those who walk in the Master's footprints, that those who have joined themselves to this class from any unclean motives are continually scourged by the truth, until constrained to separate themselves from the sanctuary class.

Though several of our Lord's parables show the general separation of the "sanctuary" class from the "host," or general mass of professing Christendom, there are two which go still further and show the testing and sifting, afterward, of the sanctuary class--the separation of the overcomers, who shall inherit the Kingdom (*Rev. 3:21*), from others of the honestly consecrated, who, overcome by the spirit of the world, neglect to sacrifice present advantages and honors of men, for the higher honors of God.

The parable of the Ten Virgins, while it shows the entire virgin or consecrated class being separated from Babylon, marks distinctly a testing and separation to take place in this class also--a separation of **wise virgins**, full of faith and fervent love and the spirit of prompt obedience, from **foolish virgins**, who allow their first love and fervency of spirit to cool, and their faith and promptness of obedience consequently to abate. The wise, living in full harmony with their covenant of entire consecration to God, and earnestly watching for the Lord's promised return, are prepared to appreciate the glad harvest message, to recognize the foretold indications of the Master's presence, and to stand whatever tests he may see fit to apply, to prove their loyalty and faithfulness. These, awake and watching, hear the Master's knock, through the words of the prophets, announcing his presence; and to them present losses and crosses, meekly borne for the truth's sake, are welcomed as the harbingers of a more lasting peace and joy and glory and blessing to follow.

When the knock of prophecy was heard announcing the

### C191

Lord's presence in the autumn of 1874, almost immediately it began to be recognized; and quickly the cry was raised, "Behold the Bridegroom! go ye out to meet him." And this cry still goes forth, and will continue until all of the consecrated virgin class have **heard**, and have had their faith

and loyalty tested by it. The wise, with lamps (the Word of God) trimmed and burning, and with oil (the holy spirit) in their vessels (their hearts), will all recognize the Lord's presence; and, by ordering their conduct and affairs in harmony with their faith, they will go "forth" to meet the beloved Bridegroom, and sit down with him at the marriage feast.

The marriage custom of the Jews formed a beautiful illustration of the Church's betrothal and marriage with Christ, her Lord. The espousal or betrothal was a formal agreement made with solemn covenants of fidelity on each side. The woman continued in her father's house until she was taken to the home of her husband, usually about a year after betrothal or marriage. The consummation of the union consisted in the receiving of the wife to the home prepared for her by the husband, and was celebrated with a great feast lasting several days--called the Nuptial Feast. At a fixed hour the bridegroom set out for his bride, who was waiting in readiness to receive him and to accompany him to their future home and to the feast which he had provided, followed by her virgin companions with lamps and all the necessary preparations.

In the parable no mention is made of the bride, but all of the "wise virgins" are mentioned as those for whom the Bridegroom comes, and who accompany him and enter to the feast of joys prepared. And this is both proper and necessary; because the Bride of Christ is composed of many members or persons, most beautifully represented in the wise virgins. The foolish virgins who obtain the light and

## C192

experience later, but who will fail to obtain the high exaltation of the "wise," faithful Bride class, will no doubt be the class mentioned (*Psa. 45:14,15*) as "the virgins her companions which **follow** her," who in due time will be favored, but not so highly, by the King.

The attitude of the wise virgins, ready, waiting and anxious for the Bridegroom's coming, fitly represents the only proper **attitude** of the Lord's betrothed, the truly consecrated Church. For a bride to neglect or to be unprepared for this, the most eventful moment of life, would prove her unfitness for the honor; and so it is with the Church: "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself," seeks to be in an attitude of heart and life pleasing to the Bridegroom, and is longing and waiting for the blessed union and feast promised by him who said, I go to prepare a place for you, and

will come again and receive you unto myself.

Two things are evident from this parable: first, that this special feature of truth (the knowledge of the Bridegroom's presence) is not intended for the world in general, nor for the nominal church in general, but only for the virgin or consecrated class; second, it is evident that this message of the Bridegroom's presence will cause the separation which will test and prove each individual of the virgin class and clearly manifest the wise, faithful, worthy ones from the unfaithful, unwise virgins.

Oh, what riches of grace are contained in this glorious message, "Behold the Bridegroom!" As yet it is a great secret known only among the saints; for the world cannot receive it. It is foolishness unto them, and will be, until the virgins have all heard, and the wise among them have fully entered in; until "the door is shut," and the "flaming fire" of the great time of trouble then to ensue will cause every eye to see (recognize) the Lord's presence and reign begun.

With what kingly grace the message of Jehovah comes to

### C193

his humble servants and handmaidens--"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's [Adam's] house [the human relationships, hopes, aims and ambitions]; so shall the King [the Lord Jesus] greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." (*Psa. 45:10,11*) And who are these who will receive such favor? They are **the "called, and accepted, and faithful."** "The King's daughter [Jehovah's daughter; for as such the Bride of Christ is owned] is all glorious **within.**" Her beauty is the beauty of holiness. Outwardly, before the world, she is not glorious; and, like her Lord in his humiliation, she is despised and rejected of men. But she will not always be so: having followed him in his humiliation, she shall also share in his glory. As a new creature, she will in due time be clothed with his divine nature--"Her clothing [when glorified] is of wrought gold"--gold being a symbol of the divine nature. "She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle work"--in the simple white robe of her Lord's own furnishing, the robe of his righteousness, upon which she will have wrought, with much carefulness, the beautiful adornments of the Christian graces. And great will be the rejoicing in heaven and in earth at her abundant entrance into the King's palace (*2 Pet. 1:5-8,11*): many will say, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is

come, and his wife hath made herself ready." (*Rev. 19:7*)  
"And the daughter of Tyre [the strong ones of earth] shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor....I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee forever and ever." *Psa. 45:12-17*

Truly "wise" will those of the consecrated prove to be who, neglecting worldly enchantments, and earthly hopes and prizes, and with hearts yearning and waiting for the

#### **C194**

Beloved, are found ready and proved worthy of the great exaltation promised, as the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

**"Bride of the Lamb, thy charms,**

**Oh, may we share."**

Since taking their lamps and following the Bridegroom represents leaving all else to follow Christ in this time of his presence, it is equivalent to leaving Babylon, where the virgins have mainly been; because the truth manifested in the light of harvest clearly indicates this separation of wheat from tares. Careful trimming reveals this fact to the wise virgins possessing the holy spirit of consecration and obedience. Such as have this "oil" will have the light also; and such, appreciating the privilege, will gladly and promptly "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

The foolish virgins, on the contrary, lacking sufficiency of oil, fail to get clear light on the subject of the Bridegroom's presence; and, being overcharged with the cares, plans, etc., of the present life, they fail to investigate the subject fully, and consequently are halting and undecided about leaving Babylon, and are measurably indifferent to, and incredulous of, the whole subject. And even if, urged by others, they reluctantly take their departure, like Lot's wife, they are constantly inclined to look back. For such the Lord left the injunction, "Remember Lot's wife." (*Luke 17:32*) And again he said, "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is **fit** for the Kingdom of God.

There is nothing in the parable to indicate that the foolish virgins will be aware of their foolishness, until the opportunity of going in to the feast has passed by. Then they will realize how foolish they were in expecting to be owned of the Lord as his Bride and joint-heirs, when they were at

most but lukewarm and distant followers. Many now "highly esteemed among men," and noted for their "wonderful works," will be among the disappointed.

C195

## And the Door was Shut

The proclamation of the Bridegroom's presence, the going forth to meet him, and the entering in with him to the marriage, **still continue**, and will continue, until all the wise virgins are "sealed in their foreheads" with a knowledge of harvest truth sufficient to separate them from Babylon, and to enable them to enter in with the Bridegroom to the feast prepared. Then, when all the virgins have been tested by this present truth, the door of opportunity will be shut, and no more will be permitted to enter to the feast; for, said the Master, I am "he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." (*Rev. 3:7*) And when the foolish virgins come knocking and seeking admittance, after the door is shut, saying "Master, Master, open it for us," he will answer them, saying, "Indeed, I say unto you, I recognize you not." Those who are ashamed of him and of his words now, and therefore indifferent to them, of such will he then be ashamed, when he is about to appear in glory and power with all his holy, faithful messengers--the wise virgins exalted and glorified with him.

The shut door, it will be perceived, has nothing whatever to do with the worldly. It is the door to the marriage feast; and it never was open to any except the consecrated, the virgin class. No other class was ever invited to enter it; and it closes when the harvest truths have sifted and separated all the warm, earnest covenant-keepers from the cold, lukewarm and overcharged, who neglect to fulfil their covenant.

Thank God, it is not the door of mercy that here closes, nor even the door of all favor; but it is the door to that one **chief favor** of joint-heirship with Christ as his Bride. But when it closes against the foolish virgins, and will never again open to their knock, though it leave them standing without, exposed to the great tribulation of the "evil day," where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of

## C196

teeth, it still leaves them in the arms of God's love and mercy, and even under his favor and special care; for the great tribulations through which they shall pass are designed to purify and purge those then repentant virgins, and thereby to fit them as vessels of honor for the Master's use, though not for the chief honor to which they were originally called, but of which they proved themselves unworthy.

Partaking to some extent of the spirit of Babylon, giving to her the weight of their influence, however small, they are reckoned of God as partakers of her sins and therefore as unworthy to escape the plagues coming upon her.

These plagues are necessary, not only for Babylon's destruction, but also for the purification and separation of the hitherto unripe wheat remaining in her; the foolish virgins, measurably intoxicated and overcome with the wine of Babylon.

The going in with the Lord to the marriage was beautifully illustrated by the happy bridal procession which escorted the Jewish bride to her husband's home, with music and lighted lamps and every demonstration of joy. Thus she entered in to the joy of her Lord and to the feast which he had provided. Thus the wise virgins are now entering in. The joy begins when they first hear of the Bridegroom's presence. Gladly they leave all else for his company and the prepared feast. Already by faith they are enjoying the coming feast, as the present Bridegroom makes known to them the exceeding great and precious things in reservation for his elect Bride, and reveals to them his great work of blessing and restoring the world, in which it will be the privilege of the Bride to share. Surely, as we enter the reception room and see evidences of the coming feast of Kingdom favor, we are already entering into the joys of our Lord. Already we have a foretaste of the good things to come. Already we are feasting, mentally, upon the richest bounties of his grace.

## C197

By faith we are already seated at the Master's table, and he himself, according to promise (*Luke 12:37*), has come forth and is serving us.

This feasting by faith on the precious truths disclosed during this harvest time began in 1875, at the close of the 1335 days (*Dan. 12:12*), in the beginning of the harvest, and is the blessedness foretold by the prophet, saying, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth earnestly, and cometh

unto the thousand three hundred five and thirty days!"

## The Wedding Garment Test

Another of our Lord's parables (*Matt. 22:1-14*) shows a still further testing of the sanctuary class--a testing and separation even among those who have heard and recognized the harvest message. The "wise virgins" of the one parable, who enter with the Bridegroom to the wedding, and the "guests" of this parable, are the same class of consecrated ones, who thus far have shown themselves faithful and obedient. In fact, this class is represented by many different figures, each of which has, as an illustration, its own peculiar force. They are represented as wise virgins, as servants waiting for their Lord's return from a wedding, as guests at a wedding, and as a bride. They are the body of Christ, the prospective bride of Christ, soldiers under Christ their Captain, branches in Christ the vine, olive branches in Christ, living stones in a temple of which Christ is the chief corner stone, pupils under Christ as their teacher, sheep over whom he is Shepherd, etc., etc. In considering these figures, we must remember that they are distinct and separate illustrations, entirely independent of each other, and seek to gather from each the lesson which it was designed to impart. If we endeavor to blend the illustrations, and wonder how a stone in a temple can be a branch in a vine, how sheep can be soldiers, or how the guests at a wedding can be

### C198

the servants, or the bride, we fail entirely to comprehend them. **Actually** we are not called to be guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb, nor servants waiting for his return from the wedding, but we are called to be the bride, though in some respects we must be **like** servants and **like** these guests--like faithful servants in our vigilance and watchfulness, and like guests in another respect.

This parable serves to show what could not be illustrated under the figure of the bride, which represents the elect church collectively as Christ's joint-heir. This shows both the character of the readiness required, and also the inspection of each individual which shall reject some and accept others. Those thus inspected are represented as already in the guest chamber. They are the wheat reaped or gathered out from amongst the tares, the wise virgins separated

from the foolish. They have heard and received the harvest truths, and are rejoicing by faith in anticipation of the glory and blessing to follow their full union with the Lord. Hitherto they all have run well; but until he reach the end of his course, "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

The condition of acceptableness and readiness for the marriage is symbolized in this parable under the figure of the **wedding garment**. It was a custom at Jewish weddings for the host to provide dresses of ceremony--white linen robes--for all the guests; and for any guest to discard the wedding robe presented by the host on such an occasion, and to appear in his own clothing, would have been considered a shameful impropriety, significant of pride and of disrespect for his entertainer.

As a symbol, the wedding garment clearly illustrates the righteousness of Christ, provided by our host, Jehovah (*Rom. 8:30-34*), imputed to every one believing and trusting in him, without which no one is acceptable at the marriage

#### **C199**

of the Lamb, and without which no guest is admitted. The invitation and the wedding robe are both necessary, and the parable shows that only those so attired are admitted even to the ante-chamber of special preparation--into the light of present truth, where the bride makes herself finally ready. (*Rev. 19:7*) The robe and the invitation received and accepted, these guests spend the short time just prior to the marriage feast (the harvest time) in adjusting their robes and giving to themselves and to each other the finishing touches of preparation. And, while thus engaged, they are together feasting already, by faith, on the prospect before them. The Bridegroom, the grand future work, the glorious inheritance and the present work of preparation are the constant themes of their thoughts and conversation.

In this ante-chamber (this favored time and condition), brilliantly lighted with the clear unfolding of divine truth now due, both the facilities for, and the inspiration to, the final adornment and complete readiness for the marriage feast are granted. But, nevertheless, the parable shows that even under these specially favorable conditions, some, here represented by "one," will insult the host, the King, by despising and taking off the wedding garment.

The unmistakable teaching of this parable then is, that the final general test of those "wise virgins," who have thus far been found ready and worthy, and who have therefore

been ushered into much of the harvest light, will be a test of their appreciation of the fact, often testified to in the Scriptures, that they are accepted to the feast, not in their own merit, solely, but primarily because their nakedness and many imperfections are covered by the merit of him who gave his life as their ransom price, and whose imputed righteousness, as a robe, alone makes them presentable and acceptable before the King. All must wear the robe. Each may embroider his own with good works.

## C200

How remarkable and significant that **this** should be the great, general, closing test. Our Heavenly Father is evidently determined that none shall be of the bride company except such as realize clearly their own nothingness, and that the great Bridegroom is their **Redeemer**, as well as their Lord and Teacher.

It seems strange, too, that any who had run well so far along the course should fall when so near the fruition of their hope; yet, when warned of such a possibility, it behooves all the consecrated to **watch** and **pray**, lest they enter into temptation; for in these last days come the perilous times foretold by the Apostle. (*1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; 4:3-5*) And yet the times are not so perilous that divine grace is unable to sustain those who lean confidently upon the Omnipotent Arm. Indeed, those who **humbly** keep the narrow way of sacrifice were never before so well sustained, or so fully equipped with the whole armor of God. But, strange as it may seem, the very abundance of God's favors, the very clearness of the unfoldings of the Lord's gracious plans (for using the Church during the Millennium to bless all the families of the earth), instead of leading to humility and a greater appreciation of the wonderful ransom price, through which release from condemnation is accomplished, and our call to the divine nature and joint-heirship with Christ is secured, seems to have the opposite effect upon some. Such seem to lose sight of their personal unworthiness, as well as of the Lord's unblemished perfection; and, instead of realizing themselves to be at best "unprofitable servants," they seem to see, in their own little self-denials for the truth's sake, something wonderful--the equivalent of what our Lord Jesus did--and feel that they as much as he are **indispensable** to the execution of the great plan of the ages which the Scriptures reveal. Such are guilty of "not holding the Head," and his great work of redemption, in

## C201

proper respect. (*Col. 2:19*) These stand condemned of "counting the blood of the covenant wherewith they **were** sanctified" (and accepted) a common or ordinary thing. (*Heb. 10:29*) These do despite to the very spirit of God's favor, when they reject the "way"--the only way--and the only name given under heaven and among men, whereby we must be saved from Adamic condemnation and fully reconciled to God.

These are represented in the parable by the one "bound," hindered from making further progress toward the feast, or even toward a further appreciation of its blessings and joys; and these will finally be cast out of the light entirely, into the "outer darkness" of the world, to share in the anguish and vexations of the great time of trouble. To these, therefore, the very truths now unfolding, designed for our good and development, become an occasion of stumbling, because they are not rightly exercised by them. And as Israel, so long specially favored of God, became proud, and began to think themselves **actually worthy** of those favors, and indispensable to the divine plan, so that God cast them off from all favor, so now it will be with those who, though they have hitherto run well, fail to keep humble, and begin to think themselves **worthy** to stand before God in **their** own righteousness, and who assume a right to partake of the feast without the wedding robe of Christ's imputed righteousness.

Peculiarly sad though it be, this feature of prophecy, shown in the parable under consideration, is also fulfilling before our eyes, forming another link in the great chain of evidence that we are in the "harvest." Some of those enjoying present spiritual favors have thus disdained and cast aside the wedding robe; and, though still speaking of Christ as Lord, they despise and deny the importance and efficacy of the very transaction by which he became Lord, and on

## C202

account of which they were counted worthy of an invitation to the marriage. (*Rom. 14:9; 5:2*) They boldly claim to need no Redeemer; and with subtle sophistries and misapplications of Scripture they convince themselves and others that they get into the sheepfold by another way without being ransomed--in their own righteousness, which the Apostle terms "filthy rags"; and some claim that they need no Advocate or Ransom, but were unalterably elected by

God to heavenly glory.

This taking off of the wedding garment, by a rejection of the value of Christ's ransom-sacrifice, first made its appearance amongst those in the light of present truth in the summer of 1878; and since that time it has been testing all who entered into the light of the guest-chamber, the harvest light. In the very presence of the Bridegroom the error has gained a footing; and some are casting aside the indispensable wedding robe. And what a commotion it has caused among the guests! what division! what sifting! Those who discard the robe seem anxious to have others do the same; and these strive while the faithful remonstrate; and the work of division goes on, even in the very guest-chamber; and doubtless it will continue up to the very last hour prior to the marriage.

Meanwhile, the invisible but present Bridegroom-King marks the faithful worthy ones who shall taste of his supper; and he permits, and in the parable foretold, this final test. Of those who have discarded the robe he inquires, "Friend [comrade], how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?"--a gentle but very forcible reminder that the wearing of the robe was the very condition of his admission to the favors enjoyed, and that he had been provided one gratis. And we challenge any who now deny the value of Christ's death as their ransom-price, to say that they came into the present light--the knowledge of the

### **C203**

Lord's presence and the other deep things of God, now so clearly seen--without, at the time of entrance, being clothed in this garment. No one ever entered in without the robe: others cannot see the deep things of God. (*1 Cor. 2:7-14*) Just as in the parable, so now, when this question is put to those who have rejected the robe, they are "speechless." They cannot deny that it was while wearing the robe they were admitted; and they do not like to acknowledge it.

"Then said the King unto his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness." The "outer darkness" is the darkness that envelops the worldly-wise, the darkness of human reasoning undirected by God's Word and unsquared by his revealed plan of ransom and restitution. The binding or restraining makes an example of such before the company of the consecrated, and helps all the truly loyal ones to see most clearly the necessity and value of the robe in the King's estimation. The servants who are directed to do the binding are those who have the

truth on the subject, and who can **bind the influence** of such with Scriptural testimonies on the value and necessity of the precious blood and the robe of righteousness which it purchased for us. In struggling against these arguments of Scripture, the disrobed ones are forced, by their own arguments and efforts to justify themselves, out of the light into the "outer darkness." To them, as to the world, the cross of Christ is now a stumbling-block and foolishness; but to the faithful, consecrated ones it is still "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

But let it not be overlooked that those of the parable who are "bound" and "cast into outer darkness" must first have been in the light of harvest truth; and consequently their responsibility and penalty are greater than the responsibility and penalty of those who never enjoyed such favor. Thousands in the nominal Church will doubtless follow the

#### **C204**

teaching of prominent leaders among them, in discarding faith in the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ as the sinner's ransom-price, who will not be accountable for the step to the fullest extent; because they have not been sufficiently enlightened with reference to it.

Thousands of professed Christians have never believed in Christ as their ransom or substitute, and have never worn the robe of his imputed righteousness. These, of course, are not noticed in the parable. The parable refers only to a very limited class, all of whom have once clearly appreciated the ransom, and while so appreciating it had, under the favor which it secured, entered into the special light of the harvest time--the time of the King's presence, just before the feast. With what care should those who have been once enlightened, and who have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, guard against the merest suggestion to a step so disloyal, unjust and disastrous. *Heb. 10:26-31; 6:4-8*

In considering these parables, we must not make the mistake of presuming that all the wise virgins have already gone into the marriage--to the guest-chamber of special and final preparation--and that the door is shut before the inspection referred to in this parable begins. The door of opportunity still stands open to all the consecrated, robed by faith in the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness; the message, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" is still going forth; the wise virgins are still going out to meet him, and entering in with him to the marriage; and the foolish have not yet

returned with oil in their vessels. But, since "the King came in" (since 1878, the parallel in time to our Lord's typical assumption of the office of King of the Jews--*Matt. 21:1-13*), the inspection of the guests and the testing of their appreciation of the wedding robe have been in progress. And while more of the wise virgins are still learning of the Bridegroom's

## C205

presence and joyfully coming in to the feast, some of those already in are proving themselves unworthy to stay in, and have been, and are being, bound hand and foot; and their appreciation and apprehension of present truth--of the Lord's presence and the present and future work--begin to grow more and more dim, as, borne along by false reasonings upon false premises, they gradually or rapidly, according to temperament, gravitate toward worldly views of things--the "outer darkness" of the world, when contrasted with the inner light, now accessible to the properly robed saints. And, doubtless, all the virgins who come in must be tested upon this subject. Happy and fearless, in this testing, will be all who from the heart can say:

"My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the Solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand."

And such can exultantly sing:

"The Prince of my peace is now present,  
The light from his face is on me.  
O listen! beloved, he speaketh:  
'My peace I now give unto thee.'  
The cross well covers my sins;  
The past is under the blood;  
I'm trusting in Jesus for all;  
My will is the will of my God."

## The End of the High Calling is Not

### The Closing of the Door

The Scriptures do not give the exact date at which the door to the marriage feast will close, though they show plainly that it will not be closed until **all** the "virgins" shall

#### C206

have had an opportunity to enter, and after all the "wise" or ready ones have done so.

An **open** "door" symbolizes an opportunity of entrance to certain conditions and privileges; a **shut** door represents the termination of such privilege or opportunity. The privilege, invitation or opportunity of the Gospel age, granting, under restrictive conditions, to believers in Christ, **entrance** into joint-heirship with him in the heavenly Kingdom and to the divine nature, is the "door" by which we "**have access into** this grace [favor] wherein we stand"; namely, into the hope of sharing the glory of God. (*Rom. 5:2*) This door, which has stood open throughout the entire age, is sometime to be closed; and the door in the parable of the virgins marks this close--the termination of all such opportunities and privileges. This parable of the virgins merely portrays the events in the close of this age among those of the true Church living at that time. The "door" of this parable represents that certain special privileges, the consummation and goal of all the favors of the Gospel age, will be open to the "wise virgins" in the time of harvest; and the closing of the door when all of this class shall have availed themselves of such privileges represents the close of **all** the favor and privileges of the Gospel age; because the feast represents in full the Gospel advantages and privileges, being a representation of the grand consummation to which all other favors lead--the promised Kingdom glories.

Consider this "door" of opportunity and privilege, soon to close. Our Lord called it a gate, and said that during the Gospel age it would be difficult both to find and to enter it, and advised us to make great effort to enter, if we would share the immortality and Kingdom honors, to which it and no other door leads. He said, therefore, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able, when once the Master of the

house hath risen up and shut to the door." (*Luke 13:25*)

This narrow way, as we have already seen,\* is the way of self-sacrifice in the interest of the Lord's plan and work. The way is made narrow by the circumstances of the present time, by the opposition of the worldly spirit against truth and righteousness, so that whoever walks in the footsteps of our Leader and Forerunner will find the way narrow or difficult and must suffer persecution. To walk in this way, as our Lord set us an example that we should follow in his steps, implies not only a passive conformity to his disposition or spirit, but also an active, energetic zeal in the promulgation of his truth at all hazards. And all who walk in this narrow way, faithful as he was faithful, unto death, have fellowship in his sufferings, and will also in due time have fellowship in his glory, at the marriage feast--in the glory to be revealed at his appearing and Kingdom. *Phil. 3:10; 1 Pet. 4:13*

In view of its glorious termination, the opportunity to walk in this narrow way of self-sacrifice for the truth's sake is the grandest privilege that was ever offered to any creature. The privilege of suffering with Christ and in his cause, after first recognizing him as our Redeemer, is therefore the door, and the only door of opportunity, by which the glory to follow, as the bride and joint-heir of Christ, can be reached.

There are three ways in which the closing of this door might be indicated: first, by a definite Bible statement of the exact date; second, by such a reversal of public sentiment with reference to the truth, that fidelity and zeal in its service would no longer meet with opposition, and when suffering with Christ for the truth's sake (*Rom. 8:17*) would be no longer possible; or third, by such a condition of affairs

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\*Vol. I, C203.

## C208

obtaining in the world that all opportunity for such service would be effectually obstructed, thus leaving no opportunities for candidates to enter into the work and to develop and prove their love and faithfulness by their activity and endurance.

Though we are definitely informed that the door will be shut sometime within this harvest period or end of the age, the Bible does not give the exact date; and, although after the great time of trouble there will be a grand reversal of public sentiment in favor of truth and justice, we have no intimation whatever that such a condition of affairs will obtain until after the harvest period is fully ended. But we have a clear intimation that **the door will be shut** in the manner last named; for, before the Millennial day breaks, we are forewarned of a dark night wherein no man can labor-- "The morning cometh, and also the night." *Isa. 21:12*. See also Vol. II, chap. viii.

The narrow way opened to us is the privilege and opportunity of cooperating with our Lord now, when to manifest his spirit of meekness and zeal and loyalty to God and his truth will be at the cost of earthly advantage; when to champion his cause and the truths which he advanced will make us, to say the least, very unpopular; and when our endeavors to honor his name and bless our fellowmen with the truth, by letting our light shine, bring upon us reproach, misrepresentation and persecution in some form. And if, as we have seen, the narrow gate-way **opened** means the privilege of thus sacrificing, faithfully, unto death, at whatever cost, it follows that the **closing of all such opportunity** for such fellowship of service and suffering would be **the closing of the door**, the barring of the narrow way to the future glory and joint-heirship; our reign with Christ being conditioned on our faithfulness in his service, which now means suffering with him. *Rom. 8:17; 6:8*

## C209

And suffering with Christ, we have seen, is not the ordinary suffering, common to all in the fallen state, but only such sufferings as are the results, more or less directly, of the following of Christ's example, in advocating unpopular truths and in exposing popular errors. Such were the causes of the sufferings of Christ; and such will be the causes of persecution, suffering and loss to all who follow in his footsteps. They will have fellowship in his sufferings now, and

in the end will be accounted worthy to share in the reward of such faithfulness to principle. This, throughout the Gospel age, has meant self-sacrificing labor and endurance of reproach in the sowing and watering of the seed of Christ's doctrines; and now, in the close of the age, it means a similar fidelity and endurance in the harvest work now in progress --even to the laying down of life, whether it be required by the gradual process of working it out in the Master's service, a dying daily, or by being brought more abruptly to a martyr's sudden death.

The worthiness of the espoused virgin Church to be the bride, the Lamb's wife, consists not merely in sinlessness, though she will be holy and "without blemish"--"without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (*Eph. 5:27*), made "whiter than snow" in the great fountain of redeeming love, her Redeemer's merit. This much is necessary to **all** who will ever be accounted worthy of lasting life on any plane. But to be the bride of the Lamb, she must not only be a virgin in purity, and in addition be free from sinful alliance and coquetry with the world, but she must be more, much more than this. She must so closely resemble her Lord, and so closely follow his footsteps and his counsel, that she will on this account be a sufferer, a martyr, as he was, and for the sake of the same **principles** of truth and righteousness. She must prove that she possesses a **consuming** love for the Bridegroom, and an untiring devotion to his name and principles,

## C210

so as to be willing to be despised and rejected of the worldly, as he was, for the sake of obedience to his doctrines.

To develop and **demonstrate** this character, she must be tried and tested. Her confidence, her endurance, her fidelity to her Lord, through evil as well as good, must be developed and proved. And only such as are thus developed and tested and by the test proved faithful, will ever be owned and recognized as the bride and joint-heir of the Lord, the heir of all things. As it is written, "Blessed the man that **endureth** under temptation: because, having become [thus] approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him"--thus intensely. Thus, rightly understood, every trial of our fidelity should be joyfully met as a fresh opportunity to show the Bridegroom the depth and strength of our love, and another proof of worthiness of his love and confidence and of the promised exaltation. Those who will share with the Lord the coming glory must not only be **called** and **accepted**, but also **faithful**, even unto

death. **Rev. 17:14**

Thus the door of opportunity to engage, with Christ our Lord, in the work of the Gospel age, will be closed when "the night cometh wherein no man can work." And all who have not previously by faithful service, developed the necessary character and proved their sympathy, devotion, love and zeal for the Lord and his truth (**Matt. 10:37; Mark 8:38**), will then be too late to do so. As represented in the parable, they will thus be proved to be "foolish virgins," for letting slip the great and glorious opportunity to suffer with and on behalf of him with whom they would gladly reign. By that time, the full number predestinated by God to constitute and complete the Church will have been called, chosen, and by trial proved faithful--"copies of the likeness of his Son." (**Rom. 8:29**) The harvest will be past, the summer time of favor ended, and only the burning of the tares will remain, to clear the field (the world of mankind) and to prepare

## **C211**

it fully for the much more extensive sowing of the Millennial age.

The closing in of this night will evidently put a stop to any further labor to disseminate the truth, which, misunderstood by the public generally, will probably be accused of being the cause of much of the anarchy and confusion then prevailing, instead of being seen in its true light as a foreshadowing of the divine mind and revelation concerning coming troubles of the world and their true causes.

Nor should we expect that the coming of night and the closing of the door will be sudden, but rather that it will be a gradual obstructing and closing down of the harvest work.

The present is the time for the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads, before the storm of trouble bursts (**Rev. 7:2,3**); and every wise virgin should appreciate this privilege of the present, both for his own intellectual sealing with the present truth, and also for engaging in the harvest work of sealing others of the wheat class and gathering them into the barn of security, before the night cometh and the door of opportunity to labor is shut.

That the present, most favorable opportunity is but a brief one, is manifest from the fact that only twenty-four years of the harvest period remain, the close of which will witness the end of the reign of evil and the ushering in of the glorious Millennial Day; and within this period the dark night of the world's greatest tribulation must find place. The great darkness which must precede the glorious day is

drawing on: "the morning cometh, and also the night"--"a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation."

Observe that, when this night cometh, when the reapers **must** cease their labors, it will prove that this final work of the Gospel age is accomplished; that the elect number of the Bride of Christ have all been "sealed," and "gathered"

## C212

into a condition of separateness from the worldly--into the barn condition (*Matt. 13:30*); for God will not permit anything to put an end to his work until it is finished. Then, all the true and faithful servants of God will have been sealed in their foreheads; and, the work of the Gospel age being finished, no more can enter into that work or reap its rich reward, foretold in the "exceeding great and precious promises" as the reward of the faithful who enter while the "door" is open. *2 Peter 1:4*

But we are not to gather from this that all, as quickly as proved faithful, will at once enter into their reward. Possibly some such may live on, far into that dark night of trouble--though our expectation is to the contrary. "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Having put on the whole armor of God, and boldly withstood error by clear and fearless presentation and defense of the truth, during this evil day, when giant errors so boldly and defiantly stalk abroad, the saints are exhorted, "Having done all, to stand," clad in full armor, with the sword of the spirit ever ready for defense, and with watchfulness and perseverance and prayer for all saints. All will have need of patience, that after having done the will of God they may receive the promise. *Rev. 14:12; Eph. 6:13; Heb. 10:36*

The ending of the high calling to joint-heirship with our Lord Jesus in the Kingdom of God, it should be distinctly understood, is not the shutting of the door in the parable of the virgins. Though the general "call" to this favor ceased in 1881, the "door" is yet open. The call is the **general invitation** of God, to all justified believers in the Redeemer, to follow in his footsteps of self-sacrifice, even unto death, and thereby prove their worthiness to reign with him in glory. This favor had a definite time for beginning: the waiting disciples were accepted to it on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 33.

## C213

And it has had, as already shown, a definite time of ending; viz., October 1881.\*

On the other hand, the closing of the "door," in the parable of *Matt. xxv*, marks the full end of all opportunity for any, even of the "called" ones, thereafter to attain the prize of the high calling. It marks the end of all opportunity to prove worthy of the prize by faithfulness in the service: all opportunity for service will there terminate, in the "night" wherein no man can work. (*John 9:4*) It is manifest, therefore, that the door, or opportunity, thus to make our calling and election sure, does not necessarily close when the call, or general invitation to all believers to enter, ceases to go forth. And, while the door stands open, it indicates that any believer who is anxious to enter and ready to comply with the conditions may yet do so, even though the general "call" or invitation to enter is no longer sent out. As a matter of fact, the door or opportunity to labor and sacrifice has not yet closed, though the general call ceased in 1881.

The Gospel age has been the calling time--first, for calling sinners to repentance and to faith in Christ the Redeemer; and, second, for calling these justified ones to the high privilege of joint-heirship with Christ in his Kingdom, on the condition of following now in his footprints of self-sacrifice, even unto death--as the condition of acceptance to the Kingdom work and honors of the coming Millennial age. When, therefore, the Lord tells us that the closing period of the age will be a harvest time, it indicates clearly a radical change--from sowing to reaping, from calling to testing the called and closing the work begun by the call.

As an illustration of the change in the character of the work at the close of the Gospel age, our Lord gave the parable of the drag-net. (*Matt. 13:47-50*) "The Kingdom of

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\*See Vol. II, Chapter vii.

## C214

heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; which, when it was full, they [the fishermen] drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels and cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the age [the harvest, *Matt. 13:39*]: the angels [messengers, servants of God] shall come forth and separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into

the furnace of fire [the great time of trouble]: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

This parable represents the nominal Christian Church as the nominal prospective Kingdom of God--**the net** cast into **the sea** (the world), which gathered **fish** (men--*Matt. 4:19*) of **every kind** (real Christians, half deceived and deluded Christians, and multitudes of hypocrites); which, when it is full (in the fulness of God's time), is drawn to shore. It shows that the "every sort" gathered into the nominal Church are not fit for the Kingdom, whatever else they may be fit for; that at the close of the age--in the harvest time--the call or invitation to a place in the Kingdom would cease by God's arrangement, as represented by the dragging of the net to shore; and that then a different work would be commenced by the fishermen--namely, a separating, a dividing work, which will accomplish the gathering of the desired sort and the rejection of others who are unworthy of the favor to which they had been called; for "many are called, but few chosen." *Matt. 22:14*

The separating work of this parable is the same as that shown in the parable of the wheat and the tares, which teaches us to expect a discontinuance of the sowing (the calling), and a change from that work to the work of reaping. The Lord's servants, who, under his direction, will thus change the work, are in both parables called angels--special messengers of God. They are his faithful disciples who, walking very humbly, and near to the Lord, and very earnestly

## C215

seeking to know his plan and to cooperate in his work, are not left in darkness concerning his times and seasons. (*Matt. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:4; Jer. 8:7-12*) Of course, this reaping and gathering relates only to those living in the harvest time, and not to those who died previously; each of whom, as he finished his course, was noted, and separated to await his proper position in or out of the glorified little flock, the Kingdom proper. *2 Tim. 4:8*

The net was not intended to catch all the fish of the sea. Our Lord, the great Chief Fisherman, designed to catch a particular number of fish of a particular kind, no matter how many of other varieties went into the net with them; and when the full number of the desired, peculiar kind, have entered the net it is ordered ashore for the purpose of sorting and separating. When the net is thus ordered ashore, the commission given at the beginning of the age, to cast the net into the sea (*Matt. 28:19; 24:14*), should be understood

as at an end; and all who would continue to be coworkers with the Lord must give heed to his directions, and no longer give their time to general fishing, but to the present work of selecting and gathering. And as the truth then due was the agency for calling, so truth, "present truth," harvest truth, is now the Lord's agency for testing and dividing.

When, therefore, the Lord's servants hear his voice, through his Word, declaring that the time has come to stop sowing and to begin reaping, to stop catching and go to sorting the fish, to stop calling and to preach the harvest message now due to those already called, they will, if faithful, gladly and promptly obey. Such, therefore, instructed of the Master concerning his plan of the ages, and not in darkness as to the times and seasons in which we are living, should no longer be going forth seeking to sow the good seed of the Kingdom in the field or world of mankind, but

## **C216**

should be "giving meat in due season to the household of faith"--scattering among the Lord's professed children the good tidings of the Kingdom at hand, and of the great joy and blessing it will soon bring to all people.

And, strange to say, it is this message of God's loving provision, in the ransom, for the restitution of all things, by and through Christ Jesus and his glorified body, the Church, God's Kingdom (this message, which should rejoice, refresh and unite all loving Christian hearts), that is to develop and draw into heart-union the true class only, to test them and to separate them from the nominal mass.

Shortly the harvest will be ended, and then both he that sowed and he that reaped will rejoice together. Now, the reapers must hasten the work, and should feel so concerned about its full accomplishment as to pray the Lord of the harvest, the Chief Reaper, to send forth more laborers into his harvest. It will not be long before the plowman of the next dispensation (the great trouble foretold, which will prepare the world for the Millennial seed-sowing) shall overtake the reaper of this dispensation. *Amos 9:13*

## Israel's Seventieth Week a Figure of

### The Close of Gospel Favor

It will be remembered that Israel's "seventieth week"--the last seven years of their favor--was very exactly marked at its beginning, middle and close; and we believe for the very purpose of giving us clearly defined dates in the close of the Gospel age of favor to Spiritual Israel. We have seen that the beginning of that week was to Fleshly Israel the date of the beginning of their harvest testing, in A.D. 29. It was marked by our Lord's baptism and recognition as Messiah at Jordan, when the reaping work began--the parallel to which, here, is the recognition of the presence of the Lord, in A.D. 1874, at the beginning of this harvest.

#### C217

The middle of that covenant week, A.D. 33, was the date of the rejection of Israel as a system or church-nation, and was marked by our Lord's death on the cross, and by his words just before his death, "Your house is left unto you desolate." And the parallel to that, here, is the rejection from favor and the fall of the sectarian systems, called Christendom or "Babylon," in 1878.

The last half of Israel's covenant week (3 1/2 years, from A.D. 33 to 36) was not a period of national or sectarian favor, but of individual favor, granting the Israelites (not as formerly through the channels of the nominal Church, but **individually**, if they would receive it) all the favors and special privileges of the Abrahamic covenant, down to the end of those seventy symbolic weeks, the limit of their favor, marked by the sending of favor to Cornelius and Gentiles in general. So in the parallel, here: the 3 1/2 years from April, 1878, where so-called Christendom, or "Babylon," was rejected from favor, to October, 1881, was the closing period of the favor of the **high calling** to individual believers. Thus, the **general** "call" (the **favor** of this Gospel age) ceased with October, A.D. 1881, just as the corresponding date, October, A.D. 36, witnessed the end of Jewish favor.

The **Jewish** favor consisted in the offer to Israel of the Kingdom--the **call** of the natural children of Abraham to avail themselves of the privileges and opportunities granted them under their Law Covenant. This **call**, favor or privilege ceased totally and forever with the end of their covenant week. The **Gospel** favor consisted in the offer of the

Kingdom (exclusively) to believers in Christ--the "**high calling**" of all reconciled to God under the Grace Covenant, who might avail themselves of the opportunities thus granted (and become members of the Abrahamic "**seed**" which is to bless the world) by joining with Christ Jesus, their Redeemer, in his covenant of self-sacrifice; the test

## **C218**

which must demonstrate their worthiness to share in Christ's coming work and glory. And it is this favor, this "call" or invitation, which we have seen ceased, totally and forever, in October 1881, the parallel point of time to the end of the Jewish call or favor.

Be it noted, that the stopping of the Jewish favor or call was followed by another general call, which, ignoring them and their past favor, nevertheless included any of them who afterward, by becoming **believers**, became worthy of that world-wide call to the honor of the Kingdom. The stopping of their past favor was just as actual as though they had not been invited to anything after their favor ceased; just as actual as though they had afterward been invited to a lower favor; but it is not as noticeable, because the general Gospel call, which did not exclude them, was the same call broadened and deepened; made applicable to **all believers** in Christ, of every nation.

The stopping of the favor or "call" here, in 1881, is followed, or rather lapped upon, by the general call of the whole world to the Millennial blessings and favors upon conditions of faith and willing obedience (not however a sacrifice unto death). This however, is a lower call, a lesser favor than that which ceased; a call to enjoy blessings under the Kingdom, but not to be parts of the anointed, Kingdom class. And this **change**--this stopping of the higher favor and beginning of a lesser favor will be little noticed in the present time, by reason of the fact that the great prize of the Kingdom and joint-heirship with Christ as partakers of the divine nature, has been generally lost sight of in the Church. The highest conception of reward generally held by Christians for centuries past is, that in their resurrection they will be given perfect bodies; and, freed from sickness, pain and sorrow, will enjoy God's favor and have everlasting life. And this conception, though far short of the real

## C219

privileges under the "high calling" of the Gospel age, is really a fair conception of the blessed privileges to be granted during the Millennial age to the world in general--to as many of them as will then yield obedience and come into harmony with God.

As a matter of fact, then, the only ones who see clearly the peculiarly high and grand features of the call of the Gospel age--the only ones, therefore, who could announce or explain **this calling**--are the very ones who are also shown from God's Word that the time limit of this call was reached in October, 1881. Others, while quoting the Apostle's words concerning a "high calling of God in Christ," really explain the lower call which belongs to the Millennial age. Hence the general Gospel call, the true one, is ended. None can extend it. Some cannot because they do not understand it and could not give it, and some because they know it to be at an end.

But though the general "call" has ceased, the "door" is not yet shut. The end of the "call" and the shutting of the "door" are distinct and separate. The "door" stands open for some to enter the race, for the great prize of joint-heirship in the Kingdom, after the **general** "call" has ceased. God had predetermined a fixed number to constitute the Church, "the body of Christ"; and there can be neither one member superfluous nor one lacking. (See this typically taught in *Lev. 21:17-23*.) It follows that he could not **call** or invite to that honor more than would complete the number he had determined. And, in October 1881, his Word shows, this full number had been secured. But, since some of those who responded under the general call and made the covenant with him will fail to keep their covenant, fail so to run as to obtain the prize, the "door" stands open after the general call has ceased, to permit the entrance to the race, to self-sacrifice in the service of the truth, of some **to take the**

## C220

**places** of such as may, during the inspection, cast aside the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness; and also of such others as, having made the covenant of self-sacrifice in the service, love the present world, become overcharged with its cares or pleasures, and fail to perform the requirements of their covenant.

And, again, it should be noted that the ending of the call in 1881 in no way interfered with the privileges of the thousands

who had already accepted the call and become God's consecrated servants: it put none out who were in. Nor does it imply that no more can come in: it was merely the stopping of God's **general** invitation.

The fact that you may only recently have come to a clear knowledge of the exceeding great and precious promises of the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him does not prove that you were not called and accepted as a runner for this great prize long before you understood how great and grand is the prize. The fact is, not one who accepts the call is able, at first, to comprehend fully either the roughness and narrowness of the way or the grandeur of the prize to be attained at its farther end. The clearness of our comprehension of the promises is to us the power of God working in us to strengthen us and to enable us to overcome present obstacles and trials. The exceeding great and precious promises are unfolded to us gradually, as we prove faithful and go on, in order that by these--by the strength and courage which they infuse--we may be enabled so to run as to obtain the prize. **2 Pet. 1:4**

The class to receive the prize is not only called and chosen (accepted), but also faithful. And though the **general call** has ceased, it is evident that the testing of the faithfulness of the called ones is not yet finished. The faithful are being sealed, and separated from those who are unfaithful to their covenant of self-sacrifice; and the wise virgins are being separated

## C221

from the foolish, whose folly consists in supposing that they can run for and win the world's prizes of honor, wealth, etc., and at the same time run faithfully the race for the great prize of glory, honor and immortality--the very conditions of which render such a dual course impossible. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." **Jas. 1:8, Matt. 6:24**

When all the faithful "wise virgins" have been proved so, and have entered in to the joys of the Lord, the "**door**" of opportunity to become of that class will close; and no more can enter it. When all the wise have entered in, the number predestinated will be complete; and then the Master will rise up and shut the door. (**Luke 13:24,25; Matt. 25:10**) Our Lord himself tells us that **then** many will begin to see matters differently--to see what privileges and opportunities for sacrifice they once enjoyed and missed. But when they seek entrance, the Master will tell them, I do not recognize you as my bride--she is complete, and I have but one. But,

thank God, other scriptures show that the foolish virgins, though thus rejected from the high calling, for which their conduct when on trial will have proved them unworthy, will nevertheless be favored, and will be known in a humbler capacity in the Lord's household.

Therefore, before the door shuts, before the full number of the faithful is completed, let each strive to make his calling and election sure; and to this end let us permit the Lord, by these precious promises and these explanatory parables, to work in us to **will** and to **do** his good pleasure.

But some may yet say, I fear that I am not one of those called before the general call ceased in 1881, because I was then not only wholly ignorant of the deep things of God's promises, but more: I was wholly a stranger to God, and even an enemy of his, far from any covenant with him to do him service, and far from any such desire. Only recently I

## C222

came to know God, at all; recently I took Christ's yoke upon me to learn of him; and still more recently I learned of the privilege of suffering with Christ now, by self-denials in his service, and that such joint-sacrificers are by and by to be made joint-inheritors with him in the glorious work of the Millennium. And now, after seeing these glories, after admiring these precious things, and after setting myself to run this race for this wonderful prize, must I conclude that it is not open to me, because enough to fill the number had already been called? I would not think to change the divine arrangement, or to ask that another be added beyond the limit determined by divine wisdom, but I shall feel keenly my misfortune.

To such we answer: Run on. Your case is not so dark as it seems to you. The "door" is not yet "shut." Remember that if **all** who had accepted the call when it closed should prove faithful to their covenant, there would be none too many, but just enough. Remember, too, that your observation as well as the Scriptures, indicates that of the many who accept the call few will be chosen, because but few prove faithful to their covenant when on trial. As one after another some of the called ones prove unfaithful, their opportunities, **their places** of labor and **their crowns** of reward are transferred to others. One of these places of labor and one of these crowns of reward may be transferred to you, and your name may be written on the scroll of life as a probationary member of the Bride of Christ, in the place of one erased as unworthy. See *Rev. 3:5; Heb. 12:23*.

Those who can grasp these precious promises and who have the desire to work in the vineyard have a strong evidence that they have been begotten of the spirit;\* for the human mind, even when justified, is unable to grasp the **deep things** intended by God for those only who have consecrated

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\*See Vol. I, C226.

### **C223**

themselves and been accepted. (*1 Cor. 2:6-16*) And the Lord is too loving and too just to authorize in the hearts of any hopes which could never be realized. To be begotten of the spirit, through the Word of truth, implies an ultimate birth to spirit conditions, unless the one as begotten prove himself unworthy--unfaithful. "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

## **The Eleventh Hour**

### *Matt. 20:1-16*

This parable seems to have been given specially to teach a lesson for this time. The laborers are those earnest, consecrated children of God who throughout this Gospel age--the "day" of the parable--are faithfully spending their time and energy, not in the service of self, the service of mammon, but in the service of God. Only the **faithful** therefore are represented by the laborers, all of whom get the same reward, the Kingdom honors represented in the parable by the "penny."

The generality of the call and the need of laborers are represented by the four calls--early in the morning, at nine o'clock, at noon, and at three o'clock in the afternoon. Yet the exact, clear understanding of **what** the wages should be was mentioned only at the beginning: the householder then "**agreed**" to give them a penny for the service. So the promise of the Kingdom was clearly understood by the early Church, but afterward was in the main lost sight of and not clearly enunciated. The living members of Christ's Church **laboring** in his vineyard at any time during this Gospel age **represent** all the laborers. And the parable shows, as its particular feature, a class who enter this service of the Lord when the day's work is about done, at the "eleventh [the last] hour." They are represented as some desirous of engaging

in the Master's service, but **too late**, the general call having

#### C224

ended. They say--"No man hath hired us," we were too late to get into the service under the call.

The Master responds by pointing to the door of opportunity for doing and suffering in his service not yet "shut" the close of which will be indicated by the coming of "the night in which no man **can work**." But he says nothing about what the reward will be; though in employing the others under his general call, he said, "Whatsoever is right I will give you"\*--a portion of the pay at first "**agreed**" upon.

So, during the Gospel age, our Lord has continually, through his mouthpieces in the Church, invited all believers to enter into his service. The full reward, the divine nature and Kingdom glory, was clearly stated and well understood at first; but, although repeated throughout the age, it has not since been **clearly** understood because of the great falling away from the truth. But now we have come to the close of the Gospel day of service--to the "eleventh hour." It is **past the time** for calling laborers for this day. Yet, some are now standing by and saying, We have not been called into the work; "no man hath hired us"; we have no promise of labor, nor of a reward if we should find work; the call is ended, the day's work is nearly done; there are enough laborers without us. But to these the Master would have us say, as his mouthpieces, "Go ye also into my vineyard"; I promise nothing, the general call is ended, the time is short, the time for labor is nearly ended, "the night cometh wherein no man can work"; but go in, show your love and zeal, and leave the rewarding to my generosity.

And this is all we can say; the only hope we can hold out is that no man ever labored for our Master who will not receive abundantly more than he could ask or expect. And

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\*The oldest Greek Manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, **omit** from *Matt. 20:7* the words, "**and whatsoever is right that shall ye receive.**"

then we know that some of the places in the work will be vacated by reason of some not continuing faithful, and that the crowns of reward set apart for such will be given to others who, by faithfulness and self-sacrifice, prove themselves worthy of the work and the reward.

So, then, if any have but recently come to know and love our Lord, and desire to serve him and his truth, let not such be discouraged because the general call ended in 1881. If you see the "**door**" of opportunity for sacrifice and service open before you, enter in. But enter quickly; for the night of darkness and of intense opposition to the truth will ere long be upon us and will hinder you from engaging in the service. "The morning cometh, and also the night." "The night cometh in which no man **can** work." When that is true, you may know that "the door is shut," that all the wise virgins have entered in, that all have been proved, and that all vacancies have been acceptably filled. All the special "servants of God" having by that time been "sealed in their foreheads" (given an intellectual appreciation of God's plan), the four winds will be loosed (*Rev. 7:1-3*), and will produce the great "whirlwind" of trouble in the midst of which the remnant of the Elijah class will be "changed," and exalted to Kingdom glory.

What a lesson is here for those who have covenanted with the Lord to serve him first and chiefly, and who are neglecting his work to strive with time and thought and means for the transient joys and prizes which the world offers. These the Lord urges, saying, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "He that **overcometh** [who conquers in himself the spirit of the world], the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and **I will not blot out his name** out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his holy servants." "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take **thy crown**." *Rev. 2:10; 3:5,11*

## Let Us Go Forth

*--Hebrews 13:13--*

"Silent, like men in solemn haste,  
Girded wayfarers of the waste,  
We pass out at the world's wide gate,  
Turning our back on all its state;  
We press along the narrow road  
That leads to life, to bliss, to God.

"We cannot and we would not stay;  
We dread the snares that throng the way;  
We fling aside the weight and sin,  
Resolved the victory to win;  
We know the peril, but our eyes  
Rest on the splendor of the prize.

"No idling now, no wasteful sleep,  
From Christian toil our limbs to keep;  
No shrinking from the desperate fight;  
No thought of yielding or of flight;  
No love of present gain or ease;  
No seeking man or self to please.

"No sorrow for the loss of fame;  
No dread of scandal on our name;  
No terror for the world's sharp scorn;  
No wish that taunting to return.  
No hatred can to hatred move,  
And enmity but kindles love.

"No sigh for laughter left behind,  
Or pleasures scattered to the wind;  
No looking back on Sodom's plains;  
No listening still to Babel's strains;  
No tears for Egypt's song and smile;  
No thirsting for its flowing Nile.

"What though with weariness oppressed?  
'Tis but a little and we rest.  
This throbbing heart and burning brain  
Will soon be calm and cool again;  
Night is far spent and morn is near--  
Morn of the cloudless and the clear.

"'Tis but a little and we come  
To our reward, our crown, our home!  
Another year, or more, or less,  
And we have crossed the wilderness;  
Finished the toil, the rest begun,  
The battle fought, the triumph won!"

**--H. Bonar**